



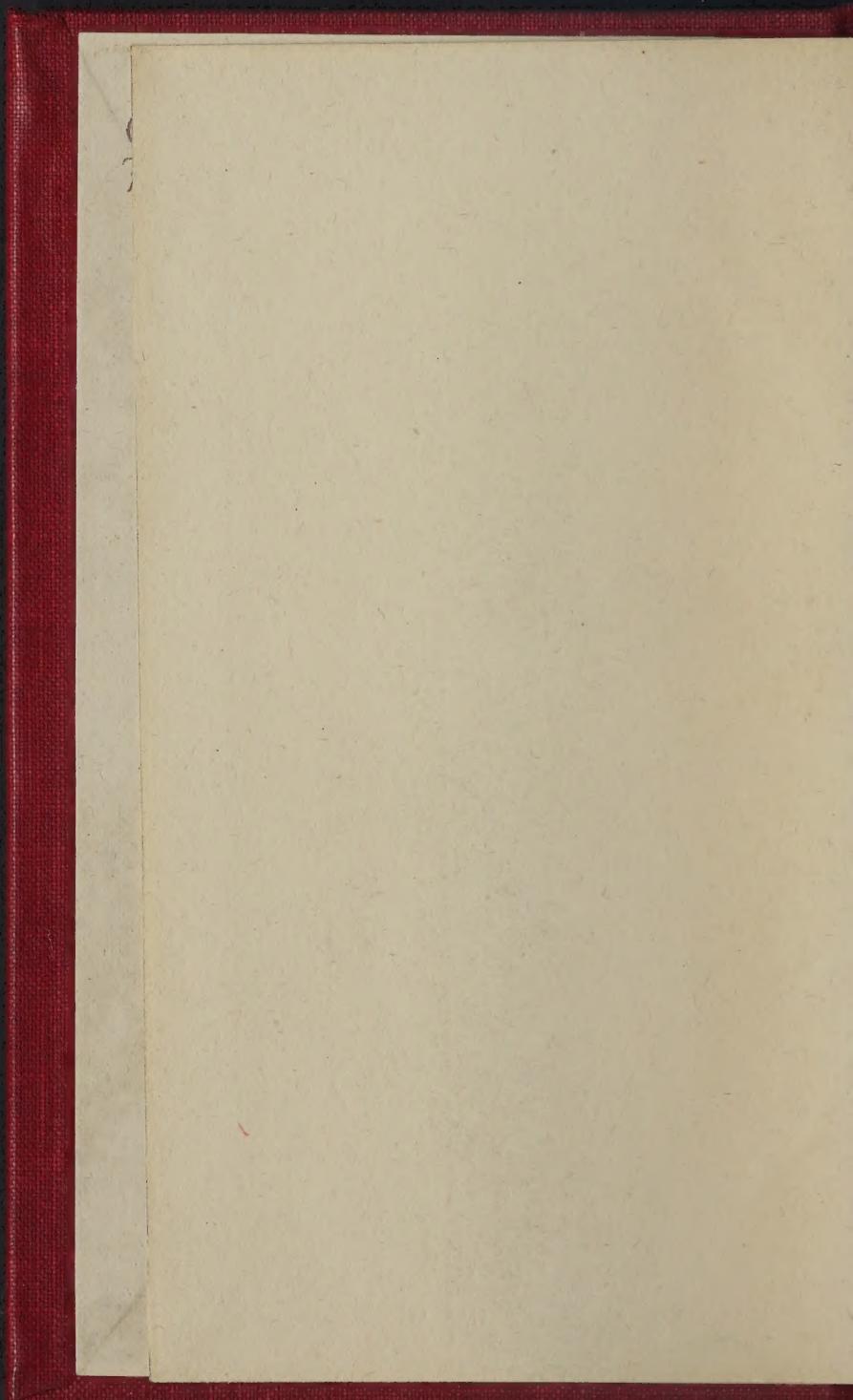
GUION - PRAYER - BALTIMORE, 1812







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A SHORT
AND EASY METHOD
OF
PRAYER:

BY THE TRULY PIOUS LADY GUION.

To which is prefixed,

The Life of the Author.

BALTIMORE:

PUBLISHED BY B. W. SOWER, AND FOR SALE
NO. 12, LIGHT-ST.

Sold also by P. H. Nicklin, and Samuel Jefferis, Market-st.

1812.

DISTRICT OF MARYLAND, To wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this seventeenth day of April, in the thirty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, B. W. Seal. Sower, of the said District, hath deposited in this Office, the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words and figures following, to wit:

"A short and easy method of Prayer: by the truly pious Lady Guion. To which is prefixed the Life of the Author."

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to the Act, entitled, "An Act, supplementary to the Act, entitled, 'An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of Designing, Engraving, and Etching historical and other prints."

PHILIP MOORE,
Clerk of the District of Maryland.

LIFE
OF
MADAME GUION.

THE practice of introducing an author to his reader in a prefactory way, or a biographical sketch being given of a writer of merit when his work is presented to the public, is, at least decorous and commendable. It is, indeed, founded upon those general principles of good breeding which is daily practised in civil society. And, that man would make but a sorry appearance, who should so far disregard the rules of civilized life, as to neglect a proper introduction of his friend when the occasion demanded it.

THE Lady who is the subject of this brief memoir* was born of a respectable family at Montargis, in France, in the year 1648. Her father, who was a man of rank

* When this was first penned it was the publisher's design to be very brief. He intended merely to preface Madame Guion's Tract on Prayer with a general outline of her character; but, finding as he went along, many events highly interesting, which he could not persuade himself to pass over in silence, he has been induced to lengthen this Biographical Sketch beyond the limits intended. When it is recollect that this lady lived contemporary with the Abbé Fenelon, and shared in his persecution and disgrace, her history must, it is presumed, create an interest in every breast.

and fortune, had but little leisure to attend to the domestic duties of his family; and her mother, on whom the care of her daughter principally devolved, had her affections too much pre-engaged in favour of an only son to suffer her to pay that attention and care which the tender years of her daughter demanded.

HER father seeing how much her education was neglected, thought proper, when seven years old, to place her in a convent of the Ursulines.* In this convent she remained nearly three years, under the care of an half sister, who used the utmost tenderness and assiduity in her education. But, owing to some unpleasant circumstances which took place in this convent, of which our author was the innocent cause, her father removed her to another, in which she was placed under the immediate care of the prioress, who was her father's intimate friend. Here she was much neglected and ill treated, contrary to the expectation of her father, who found it expedient, at the expiration of eight months, to take her home.

Being now nearly eleven years old, and possessing a handsome person, a genteel deportment, and many amiable accomplishments, her mother seemed for a short time

* Children are educated at many of the French convents as at boarding schools.

to forego the partiality she entertained towards her son. But this gleam of parental affection was only momentary. Her son still held the chief place in her esteem. This was too evident and too mortifying not to be felt by her daughter with the severest regret. As her father was a man of piety, and tenderly attached to his daughter, he would not have suffered her to have been ill treated, had he have been privy to it. But, owing to occasional indisposition, and frequent absence from home, he was too much a stranger to the harsh usage his daughter received to remedy the evil.

About this time the family removed to Paris, and Madame Guion being now about fifteen, several advantageous offers of marriage were made, which her father saw fit to refuse. There was however, a gentleman of fortune, who had, notwithstanding her tender years, for a long time solicited her in marriage. This offer was now accepted by her father, perhaps from a fear lest his daughter should leave the country upon changing her condition in life.

No sooner were the nuptials solemnized than Madame Guion's situation became truly deplorable. She found herself united to a man twenty-two years older than herself, extremely irritable in his temper, and often severely afflicted with the gout. And, as if to heighten the crosses which her marriage occasioned, she was obliged to be in

continual subjection to her mother-in-law, who was, though a professor of religion, one of those Ignis-fatuus' which, by a false light, serves to delude the unwary, and who omitted no opportunity of rendering the life of her daughter-in-law miserable. If Madame Guion's trials had hitherto been great they were now augmented; her vivacity was destroyed and her spirit was broken. Her mother-in-law used every subtlety to injure her in her husband's estimation; who, from his habitual indisposition and natural temper seemed to need no incentive to render the life of his amiable consort extremely unhappy.

As we have yet said nothing with respect to Madame Guion's religious tenets, or devotional exercises, it may not be amiss here to observe that she was brought up in the Catholic faith, and from tradition and education warmly attached to the church of which she was a member.—She was ever sincere and ardent in her devotion from her childhood, attending to all the sacraments, festivals, and requirements of her church with the most scrupulous exactness. She performed penances, gave alms, and went through a round of duties even beyond the requisition of her directors. But, until the period of which we are now about to speak, we have reason to believe her to have been a stranger to internal piety and true devotion.

IT happened about this time that a person of great sanctity, who had lately come out of a five years solitude, passing through the place called upon her father, who, knowing somewhat of the situation of his daughter's mind, strongly recommended her to him. Overcome at length by her father's persuasions she consented to see him, and without hesitation made him acquainted with certain difficulties under which she laboured with regard to prayer. "It is, Madame," said he, "because you seek WITHOUT, what you have WITHIN. "Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart and you will there find him."

"These words," says she, "were to me like the stroke of a dart. I felt at this instant a very deep wound, a wound so delightful that I desired not to be cured. "They brought into my heart what I had been seeking so many years; or rather they discovered to me what was there, and which I had not enjoyed for want of knowing it."

SHE was thus at once delivered from one of her greatest difficulties. She now found a wonderful facility in prayer, which seemed infused into her heart, after the sweetest and most ineffable manner. She was now better able to support herself under the ill-treatment she received from her husband and her mother-in-law, who, so far from relaxing in their barbarity suffered

even the domestics to insult her. She bore all with the greatest calmness and resignation, giving herself in sacrifice to God, and enjoying his presence in the consoling exercise of mental devotion.

Madame Guion had certainly a right to expect a very different conduct from her husband. Fond, affectionate, and tender, she endeavoured to mitigate his distresses, and console him in his affliction. She had besides already presented him with two fine sons and a daughter. But the frequent return of his maladies, together with heavy losses sustained from the king, who considerably retrenched his revenues, so soured his mind that he seemed incapable of connubial bliss.

AFTER a short excursion in the country Madame Guion found, upon her return, that her children had been seized with the small pox. Having never had the disease, her friends pressed her to remove for her own safety, but her mother-in-law refused to suffer her, alledging that she would take it in one place as well as in another if she was so disposed. Madame Guion thereupon submitted and became a victim to the disorder. Her youngest son died, and that at a time, and under circumstances, the most distressing. She was confined herself when she heard the news of his death, and but little hope entertained of her recovery. But the time of her dissolution had not yet arri-

ved. She was restored again to health and the embraces of her two surviving children.

UPON Madame Guion's recovery from the small pox she found she had lost much of her natural beauty, and ever looked upon herself as deformed. This, however, was rather a source of satisfaction to her than otherwise. She thought she should not now be so much admired and applauded for her beauty as she had formerly been, and that she should therefore not have so great a temptation to vanity. However this might have been in the general, it appears to have been eminently the case with regard to her husband; who, notwithstanding the severity of his conduct towards her, had ever been enamoured of her external appearance; but, as she had now lost that beauty which he had before admired, his conduct became more uniformly rigid.

As this Lady's life seems filled with the severest crosses and trials, we shall select but a few, though perhaps not the least, and hasten to that period, when, taking upon her an apostolic mission for the good of others, she had to endure the greatest hardships, and suffer the rigours of an apostolic life. But to return. Having obtained leave to go to Paris on account of her ill health, she resolved to pass some time at an abbey four leagues distant. Here she

had in a dream a strong presentiment of her father's death. An express arrived the next day requiring her immediate return, informing her at the same time that her father had been taken dangerously ill. Although she was herself extremely weak and emaciated, and at the distance of thirty leagues from home, she instantly set off on her way thither. But alas! she beheld her father no more! Upon her arrival she found he was already buried. Being exhausted with excessive fatigue she repaired immediately to her chamber. About two o'clock in the morning her husband, having left her apartment, returned with the mournful intelligence that her daughter was also dead. This was both sudden and unexpected as her daughter had not been greatly indisposed.

THUS she found herself, almost in the same instant, bereaved of a father whom she tenderly loved, and of a daughter on whom she almost doated. Shortly after this, as if to heighten her calamities, her brother, who was married and settled at Orleans, entered into a plot to ruin her husband, contriving to make it appear that himself and sister owed Monsieur, the king's brother, two hundred thousand livres. Hereupon her husband became so exceedingly exasperated against her, that he could no longer speak but in a passion. Frequently declaring that he would not

meddle in the affair, but that he would give her up her portion, and let her live as she could. Luckily, however, the affair was cleared up to the satisfaction of the judges; who, perceiving the intrigue, would have condemned the plaintiff to the costs, but, to save the honour of the prince, who had lent his name on the occasion, they adjudged the defendant to pay fifty crowns.

THIS affair, in all probability shortened the life of Monsieur Guion; for, until judgment was given in his favour, his chagrin and choler knew scarce any bounds. He died not long after, on the 21st of July, 1676. His maladies had become so numerous and so extremely painful, that for some time previous to his death he ardently desired the event.

MADAME Guion was now in her 29th year, possessed of an ample fortune, and mother of three fine children. She immediately applied herself to settling her husband's affairs, which she did with the utmost precision. Many gentlemen of distinction who had lodged papers in her husband's hands for his examination and advice respecting intricate points in controversy, now agreed to make her sole arbiter in their several causes. With some reluctance she complied; and, after examining the merits of their several claims, decided to the admiration of all concerned.

ABOUT three years previous to the

death of her husband, Madame Guion fell into a state of spiritual *privation*, which continued near seven years. It may seem singular that one who had been so eminently supported by the exercise of prayer, and enabled thereby to bear up under such heavy crosses as she had to encounter, should now be so far forsaken and left to herself, as scarce to be able to derive any consolation from that exercise. A spiritual aridity seemed to have seized upon her whole heart; and her life was embittered by the recollection of what she had once enjoyed, as she now supposed that she had lost the sweetness of grace for ever.

SOME time after her husband's decease, Madame Guion had occasion to write on business to father La Combe, superior of the Barnabites at Tonon. She took the opportunity at the same time to tell him pathetically of her state, that she apprehended herself fallen from grace, and guilty of the blackest ingratitude towards God. This good ecclesiastic, far from breaking the bruised reed, returned her a very consolatory answer. She thereupon requested his particular prayers on her behalf. This good father received her letter on Magdalene's eve, 1680, and the next day, (being that on which she had some years before espoused herself to Christ,) she found, to her inexpressible joy, her gloom and darkness dissipated; and the Sun of Righteous-

ness shone upon her soul with his most resplendent beams. She seemed entirely a new creature, and as much raised above nature as she had been for a long time depressed under its burden. The whole creation appeared to wear a new aspect, and she experienced a kind of beatitude every day increasing in her heart. She felt most heartily disposed to employ her substance in the cause of God, and conceived the design of going to Geneva, a city of Savoy, situate near the confines of France and Switzerland, on the river Rhone. This city was principally the resort of Calvinists from France, having once been the residence of Calvin. Her design in going thither was to erect a religious establishment for the education of such as should be willing to devote themselves to God. She communicated her intention to the bishop of Geneva, who approved of her design, but rather wished to engage her at Gex, a small town about seven miles north west of Geneva, where, he said, a Catholic establishment was then forming. This she conceived not to be her calling, as she had, she thought, received sufficient indications that it was God's will that she should go to Geneva. She made M. Bertot, her director, acquainted with her design, who fully acquiesced therein, being persuaded that it would redound to God's glory.

HAVING privately settled her affairs,

and made provision for the education of her two sons, she determined that her daughter, who was then about five years of age, should accompany her to Geneva. Knowing that her family would be much opposed to her departure, she did not dare to let them know of her intention. And the more effectually to prevent a disclosure, she set off privately for Paris, whence she embarked on the river Seyne, having previously taken her seat in the flying stage, which she joined at Melun. She arrived at Annecy, which was the residence of the bishop of Geneva, on Magdalene's eve, 1681. The day following she renewed her solemn covenant at the tomb of Francis de Sales; and, passing on, arrived the same day at the French resident's in Geneva. No preparation having been made there for her reception, and being in company with Madame Garnier, superior of the new Catholics at Gex, she accompanied that lady thither.

MADAME Guion found herself disagreeably situated upon her arrival at Gex. The accommodations were extremely bad, and her daughter's health began visibly to decline. The bishop of Geneva wrote to Father La Combe at Tonon to come immediately to Gex, and console Madame Guion in the sacrifices she had made. Upon the arrival of that pious man, this lady experienced the most heart-felt joy.

She had cherished the hope that her daughter could be better accommodated at Tonon than here ; but, finding she had little to expect from thence, she looked upon herself as having sacrificed her child in coming hither.

As soon as it was known in France that Madame Guion had left the country, the public censure became loud and general. Father de La Mothe, her half brother, wrote to her that her mother-in-law, with whom she had left her youngest son, and entrusted considerable of her estate, had fallen into a state of childhood. This however was false.

As the new establishment at Gex was in its infancy, the bishop of Geneva wished to secure the interest of Madame Guion in its favour. To this end he proposed making her prioress of the house ; but, finding that she refused this with every similar offer, he had hopes of succeeding through the medium of Father La Combe, who was then this lady's director. He accordingly informed that Father that he *must* engage her in their favour. La Combe, possessing too much piety to enter into so nefarious a design, replied, that he could not in conscience *compel* a foreign lady, who had already contributed largely to that institution, to engage with them and thus to hazard her remaining fortune in the success of their establishment. This answer so en-

raged the bishop that he threatened to degrade and suspend him.

MADAME Guion finding she could no longer remain as a boarder in this house, but that she must engage or retire, chose to seek an asylum in a convent of the Ursulines at Tonon. The bishop, however, for some time treated her with a shew of respect, still hoping to accomplish the end he had in view. The more easily to effect which he wrote to Father de La Mothe, and succeeded in drawing that prelate into his design.

DURING Madame Guion's residence at Tonon, (which was about two years and an half,) the bishop, finding he was not likely to succeed in his wishes, began to declare himself opposed to her remaining in his diocese. This conduct on his part evidently proceeded from chagrin and disappointment; and, having been foiled in his project of securing this lady's interest in the new establishment at Gex, he omitted no opportunity of vilifying and aspersing her character. He even carried matters to the greatest length; and raised her many enemies, who, though ignorant of her carriage and conduct became her violent persecutors.

THE marchioness of Prunai, who resided at Turin, anxious to shield this lady from the malice of the bishop, as well as to avail herself of the company and converse

of a person so eminently pious, despatched a messenger to Tonon, inviting her to quit that place and reside with her. Madame Guion being at that time extremely ill she could not comply; but, upon its renewal shortly after, she accepted the invitation.

AFTER Madame Guion had continued with the marchioness of Prunai for some time, undetermined what course to take, or what plan to pursue for the education of her daughter, Father La Combe arrived from Verceil, where he now held the office of prebend and counsellor to the bishop of that diocese: still acting, however, as Madame Guion's director, he told her she must return to Paris without delay. This was, indeed, a severe shock to that lady, who, from the avidity with which the bishop of Geneva and Father La Mothe had defamed her, had little to expect upon her return, but the severest persecution. She had besides been informed of the disposal of her effects upon the death of her mother-in-law, which had lately taken place.

WHAT the motives were which induced Father La Combe to urge her to return is unknown. Certain it is he had approbated her leaving France some years before, under the idea of her being able to establish herself at Geneva. But whatever they were, he did not persevere therein; for, upon Madame Guion's arrival at Grenoble,

whither Father La Combe accompanied her, at the request of the Father provincial, he seemed perfectly satisfied that that lady should remain there, believing, he said, that God would glorify himself in her in that place.

HERE Madame Guion continued for some time, residing at the house of a pious widow, and daily instructing such as came to see her in the necessity and utility of prayer. She had not been many days in the place before people of every description flocked to see her. She found herself constantly taken up from six in the morning until eight in the evening, in speaking of the things of God.

IT was in this place that her Tract on Prayer was first published, at the particular request of one of the members of the parliament. Many religious persons, among whom were the master and superior of a noviciate, heartily embraced her sentiments as contained in that treatise, and submitted to practise prayer after the manner there laid down. “I am,” said the superior, “become quite another man, I could not practise prayer before, because my reasoning faculty was grown dull and exhausted; but now I do it as often as I will, with ease, with much fruit, and a quite different sensation of the presence of God.” This candour was truly characteristic of a gentleman and a Christian.

HERE it was also that Madame Guion wrote her Explications on the Scriptures, which have since been published in twenty volumes octavo ; and, though it may seem incredible to some of our readers, she assures us that this voluminous work was written principally during the hours usually allotted to sleep, and that the transcriber, whatever diligence he used, could not copy in five days what she wrote in one night.

ALTHOUGH this lady was much resorted to and sought after, while at Grenoble, she had, nevertheless, to suffer much from slander and persecution. The bishop of Geneva pursued her by letter, and laboured hard, not altogether without success, to prejudice the minds of many against her. At length the bishop of Grenoble's almoner persuaded her to go to Marseilles, whither he, together with another ecclesiastic accompanied her. It was about ten o'Clock in the morning when she arrived there, and before night she found the whole place stirred up against her. Many persons went to the bishop, and represented that, on account of her Treatise on Prayer, she ought to be expelled the city. The bishop, with one of his prebends, immediately examined the Tract; and, finding nothing objectionable therein, he sent for Monsieur Malaval and a father Recollect, to inquire whence the tumult had arisen. The bishop being satisfied on this head, and finding that it

had been occasioned at the instigation of certain priests who were much opposed to the spiritual path, sent apologies to Madame Guion for what had happened, saying it was usual with these people to insult all who were not of their cabal.

FINDING herself thus circumstanced in a strange place, she scarce knew which way to turn. At length she resolved again to visit the marchioness of Prunai, who had since her departure, been solicitous for her return. With this view she went to Nice, but finding that a litter could not pass the mountains into Turin, she knew not how to get thither. After some days she was informed that a shallop was about sailing for Genoa, and that, if she chose, she might embark and be landed at Savona, from whence it would not be difficult to get a conveyance to the estate of the marchioness of Prunai. Madame Guion embraced this opportunity, and embarked; but, owing to contrary winds, and a high sea, she could not be landed at Savona, and was obliged to proceed to Genoa, in Venice. Here she had to suffer many insults from the inhabitants, caused by the resentment they bore against the French in consequence of a late bombardment. After some time and excessive entreaty, she engaged a litter to take her as far as Verceil. This route she was forced to take, not being able to get a direct conveyance to the estate of the mar-

chioness of Prunai. It was, however, with great reluctance that she consented to go to Verceil. This being the present residence of Father La Combe, she knew her enemies would seize the occasion to invent new slanders, by representing her, in taking this journey, as running after him. She had, however, to submit, and Providence *led her whither she would not*. In her way thither she had to pass a wood infested with robbers. The muleteer gave her to understand, while on the road, that she might expect to be robbed, and perhaps murdered. This gave her but little uneasiness ; life or death seemed alike indifferent to her. Scarcely had she been apprized of her danger before the litter was stopped by four armed men. The driver was much frightened, but Madame Guion, with great calmness, and perfect resignation, saluted them with a light bow, by way of courtesy. They thereupon changed their design ; and, after respectfully saluting her in their turn, rode off.

As Madame Guion was only attended by two waiting women, the muleteer whom she had engaged to take her to Verceil, thinking to draw money from her, treated her with great indignities. Not succeeding, however, therein, he consummated his base behaviour by selling her the next day to the post. In a new equipage she had now to proceed to Alexandria, a frontier town,

subject to Spain, on the side of the Milanese. Upon their arrival there, the driver assayed to put up at the post house as he had formerly done. Whereupon, the landlady, finding he had women in the chaise, refused to admit them. The driver being determined to carry his point would not take them elsewhere. The dispute rose to a great height. The officers of the garrison, and a vast mob, were collected on the occasion. At length the woman admitted them. Upon Madame Guion's entering the house the landlady shewed her a room where she told her to conceal herself, declaring that her son had sworn that he would kill the first woman that should lodge in the house, in consequence of an affair that had happened there a short time before. Whether the danger was or was not really as great as it appeared we cannot say, but we believe few would have felt themselves at ease in such a situation. But Madame Guion, looking beyond the creatures, viewed the Creator as being able to protect and to deliver.

AFTER a short stay they renewed their journey ; and, after suffering a variety of disagreeable incidents on the way, arrived at Vercceil. Upon her arrival there, she found a very cold reception from Father La Combe. He told her that as she had thrice refused the pressing invitation of the bishop to come thither and settle in his

diocese, he did not know what that prelate might think of so unexpected a visit. But, upon Madame Guion's informing him that she took this route through necessity, and that she did not intend to continue long there, he appeared more satisfied.

As soon, however, as the bishop of Verceil knew of her arrival he treated her with the most marked respect and friendship. He immediately wrote to the bishop of Marseilles, thanking him for his kindness in protecting Madame Guion from the insults and indignities offered to her in that place. He also wrote to the bishop of Grenoble to the like effect. Upon learning that this lady was on her way to Turin, and that she designed residing there with the marchioness of Prunai, the bishop used his utmost endeavours to detain her at Verceil. He even sent Father La Combe expressly to Turin, to exhort the marchioness of Prunai to come and settle within his diocese, declaring that he would unite them both in a new congregation. This however did not succeed.

AFTER a short stay in Verceil Madame Guion found her health much impaired, both from the climate and the excessive fatigue she had undergone. Her physicians informed her that she could not survive long if she did not leave that country, the air being extremely prejudicial to her constitution. Upon the receipt of this in-

telligence the good bishop of Vercueil was most sensibly affected, and passionately addressed Madame Guion to the following effect:—“ You were willing to be in the diocese of Geneva, and there they persecuted and rejected you; and I, who would so gladly have you, cannot keep you.”

SOME time prior to this Father La Mothe, jealous of the growing reputation of La Combe at Vercueil, had written to the Father general of the Barnabites to send La Combe to Paris, representing it as a public loss that a man of his abilities should be suffered to remain where he now was, and where his language must necessarily become corrupted. Not being able to discern the malignity of La Mothe’s intentions, the Father general would have complied had not the bishop of Vercueil earnestly solicited La Combe’s continuance as his prebend and confessor. Upon the death, however, of the Father general, which happened about this time, La Mothe wrote to the vicar general, his successor *pro tem.* renewing his former request. The vicar general not penetrating his design, and hearing that Madame Guion was about returning to France on account of her health, sent an order to Father La Combe to accompany that lady thither.

ON receiving this order La Combe immediately set off; and, having business to transact upon the way which would detain

him some time, he agreed to wait for Madame Guion near the mountains in Turin. In the mean time the bishop of Vercueil had her conducted thither at his own expense, testifying the sincerest regret at being forced to part with her.

AFTER spending some time with the marchioness of Prunai, Madame Guion set forward on her way to Paris, accompanied by Father La Combe. At Chamberry they fell in with La Mothe, who was then going to the election of a Father general. He affected the greatest joy upon seeing his sister, and begged of La Combe attentively to serve her on her journey. After visiting Grenoble, whither she had left her daughter some years before for her education, she proceeded towards Paris; not, however, without strong presentiments of the severest persecutions.

MADAME Guion arrived at Paris on Magdalene's eve, 1686, being about five years since she had left that city. She soon perceived that La Mothe entertained the blackest designs against her; that he wanted to get the guardianship of her children in order to possess himself of her estate.* Finding that La Combe would

* The persecution that this lady underwent, arose, perhaps, principally from the aversion her enemies entertained to her doctrine of a disinterested love to God. She seems to think that on the part of La Mothe, who was the prime mover in the business, it proceeded from views of interest. We shall not contend for the one or the other as the cause, the effect is more certain, in

not second his designs, he did not hesitate to traduce the character of that ecclesiastic. He also industriously calumniated his sister, representing her as having too great an attachment to La Combe; while, under the specious pretext of concern for her reputation, he assiduously endeavoured to become her director. Finding his artifices to prove abortive, La Mothe, excited by revenge, conceived the design of ruining Father La Combe. In order to effect his purpose he presented him as a dangerous person in the church. Accusing him of heresy, and of embracing the opinions of Molinos. He thereupon obtained an order from the king for his suspension. This he artfully concealed from La Combe, contriving to draw that Father again into the exercise of his public functions, upon which he had him immediately arrested and confined in the Bastile, for disobeying the royal mandate.

HAVING succeeded thus far, La Mothe and his accomplices endeavoured to frighten Madame Guion, telling her that great crimes were laid to her charge, and that she was accused not only of being in the errors of Molinos, but of holding a literary correspondence with him. Persuading her

which we shall not be liable to error.—It is but justice to acknowledge here that the writer of this memoir, not the most jealous of literary fame, has, in order to throw light on the subject of this lady's persecutions, incorporated much, in the succeeding pages, already given to the world.

to a precipitate flight, hoping thereby to render her the more suspicious. But she refused to fly, alledging her innocence, her attachment to the church, and her willingness to undergo an examination. Finding they could not induce her to flight, a counterfeited letter was presented to the king, whereupon they procured an order for her arrest. She was accordingly, on the 29th of January 1688, conducted to the Visitation of St. Mary's, there to wait an examination. Here she was kept in close confinement, without any attendant, and not permitted to see her daughter. The nun, to whose charge she was committed, looking upon her as an heretic, treated her in the most barbarous manner.

DURING her confinement she was frequently examined by the Official (or judge of the ecclesiastical court), and other persons deputised for that purpose. Finding, however, nothing whereon to ground an accusation, they permitted her to have the liberty of the cloister. But, upon her refusing to consent to the marriage of her daughter with a person of libertine principles, she was again closely confined. At this time she suffered extremely from the intense heat, and the closeness of her apartment. She thereupon fell into a violent fever, which in all probability would have terminated her existence, had not the signal interposition of Providence been manifest in her favour.

IT is very generally known that Madame de Maintenon at this time swayed the counsels of Louis XIV. This lady had a sincere respect for religion, possessed insinuating manners, and a very genteel and engaging address. Through her instrumentality Madame Guion was at length set at liberty; and, for some time shielded from the malice of her enemies.

AFTER Madame Guion's liberation from St. Mary's, she became acquainted with the Abbe Fenelon, afterwards archbishop of Cambray. Their first acquaintance took place at the dutchess of Bethune's, with whom they were both intimate. Fenelon had, for a long time, been much prejudiced against Madame Guion, from the rumours and scandals he had heard to her disadvantage. Upon conversation, however, with this lady, his prejudices were greatly removed. After this, Fenelon was more particular in acquiring information, from the most authentic sources, respecting her private character and conduct. The result of his inquiries was a firm conviction of her merit, and of the wrongs she had received. A strict friendship thereupon ensued between them, which, although not the *cause* of the Abbe Fenelon's disgrace, was made an engine to contribute thereunto.

Madame de Maintenon having founded a religious establishment called St. Cyr, for the education of young ladies of quality,

frequently invited Madame Guion thither; and the greatest intimacy subsisted between these two ladies for the space of three or four years. Piqued at the attention shewn Madame Guion, and the high estimation in which she was held, her former enemies engaged the bishop of Chartres, who was then superior of St. Cyr, to represent that she troubled the order of that house. Madame de Maintenon, whose judgment was not equal to her wit and parts, was soon won over by the bishop of Chartres, who was also her director, and for whose opinions she had the greatest deference.

As quietism appeared now to be gaining ground in France, and excited the most serious alarm in the Gallic church, this lady became no mean object of its fury. Madame de Maintenon being very susceptible of prejudice, it was not difficult for the bishop of Chartres to persuade her that Madame Guion's Tract on Prayer contained the grossest errors, and all the horrid doctrine of quietism.

FINDING the storm again gathering Madame Guion took the resolution of putting her writings into the hands of some prelate of eminent learning, who might examine and make report of them. For this purpose she pitched, says an author of Fenelon's Life, upon the bishop of Meaux (Bossuet), as being a man whose approbation would counterbalance the authority of the bishop

of Chartres, and quickly destroy the calumnies of the furious doctors. Her manuscripts were accordingly put into the hands of the bishop of Meaux, who read them over and immediately told the duke of Chevreuse that he found a light and an unction in them which he had not met with anywhere else.

IT was no sooner known that Madame de Maintenon had declared herself against Madame Guion, than endeavours were used to excite a suspicion in her to the disadvantage of the Abbe Fenelon. She was ready enough to entertain it. She had at first promised herself an absolute ascendancy over him; but, finding that he often opposed her wishes, she grew apprehensive, lest a man whom she could not be sure of, should get too much credit with the king. Besides, as some have averred she had not been for a long time partial to Fenelon, on the ground of his having prevented the king from making public their marriage.

THIS disposition of Madame de Maintenon gave occasion to the bishop of Meaux to discover the secret uneasiness he had for some time cherished against the Abbe Fenelon. As that prelate had been accustomed to see himself admired as the greatest genius of the age, he could not bear to behold the eyes of the public turned away from him to fix upon the rival of his reputation. This was, perhaps, the original cause of all

their discords. But, it is presumable, the bishop of Meaux did not, in the beginning, think of carrying things to such extremities as the heat of disputation afterwards led him.

THE rage and outcry against Madame Guion became general, and the reputation of her friends seemed to suffer by the aspersions thrown upon her. She therefore resolved to break silence and justify herself in a public way. To this end she wrote to Madame de Maintenon, desiring that commissioners might be appointed to collect information and give a definite sentence upon every thing that was laid to her charge. She offered at the same time to make herself a prisoner within eight days, in whatever prison should be thought proper, that she might undergo the penalties due to her in case she should be found guilty.

THE duke of Beauvilliers delivered this letter to Madame de Maintenon. But that lady did not think proper to fall in with the expedient proposed. She told the duke that she did not believe the false reports that were abroad about Madame Guion; that the matter in question was not her morals, but her sentiments; that the latter ought first to be examined and the calumnies of the other would of themselves fall to the ground.

A STRICT inquiry into the doctrine of Madame Guion's books was what Madame

de Maintenon insisted upon, and she spoke of it to the king. The bishop of Meaux was thereupon chosen as chief examiner. The bishop of Chaalons, afterwards Cardinal de Noailles, and Monsieur Tronson, superior of the seminary of St. Sulpicius, were joined with him, both of whom undertook the examination with great mildness and candour. Madame de Maintenon was desirous that the Abbe Fenelon should make a fourth, to which the king gave his approbation.

THE Abbe Fenelon, conscious of the purity of his own intentions, and relying upon the integrity of the examiners, opened himself to them with an unreserved simplicity of heart, and without the least fear or distrust.

THE bishop of Meaux told him that he had never read any of the contemplative writers, and prayed him to make some extracts from them, and to add his own remarks. The Abbe Fenelon did so, and sent him a collection of passages taken from the Greek and Latin fathers, the canonized saints, and approved doctors.

THE design of this collection was to shew that the expressions of the contemplatives, in all ages, were as unguarded as those of Madame Guion; that neither the one nor the other ought to be taken in strictness. But yet, after all allowances were made, there would still remain

enough to prove by a constant tradition, that, though we are bound to love God as the author of our happiness, we are obliged to love him yet *more*, as he is infinitely perfect; that we ought to love God for himself, all other things for his sake, and our own being as his image; that we should will good to ourselves only as belonging to him, and thus enoble our hope by charity; and desire our own happiness as a state which exalts, purifies, and consummates our love.

THE bishop of Meaux had always maintained the opinion opposite to *disinterested love*. He thought nobody understood what was sound doctrine so well as himself, and could not bear to be shewn that the tradition of the church, in so essential a point, had escaped his observation. The Abbe Fenelon insisted stedfastly on what he had advanced, which was insupportable to the bishop from a man whom he looked upon as his disciple.

THIS examination which was held principally at Issy, continued the space of six months. It was with great difficulty they could come to any precise determination. The principal thing in view at its commencement was to convince Madame Guion of certain supposed errors, and to condemn her works. But the bishop would not now rest here. He cried out the church was in danger. It would be an additional lustre to

the glory of his triumphs over the protestants to convict so great a man as the Abbe Fenelon of error. He was, therefore, for making canons to ascertain and secure the Catholic doctrine. Accordingly thirty articles were drawn up by the commissioners relative to points of faith, which were also signed by the Abbe Fenelon.

"I perceived," says Madame Guion, from whom we shall now quote, "by what I heard daily of Monsieur de Meaux, that he grew more and more at a distance; and what was still worse for the matter in debate, he was fixed in his thoughts, and that fixedness was an insurmountable obstacle in the way of truth.

"AFTER Monsieur de Chaalons had perused at leisure my books and commentaries upon the Scriptures, he consented to the proposal which was made him to meet at Monsieur Tronson's country seat; who being infirm and out of order, could not so well meet the other gentlemen. I requested it as a favour that the duke of Chevreuse might be also present when they met, he being a particular friend of both the prelates, and perfectly skilled in the whole affair. I likewise requested that after they had discussed any point in question, that they would write down the decision of it, so that the facts agreed to might be ascertained and fixed.

"BUT Monsieur de Meaux, who had

promised Madame de Maintenon a condemnation of me, and who would be the sole director of the affair, started so many difficulties, sometimes on one pretence and sometimes on another, that he found means to elude and set aside what I had requested. He told me I might talk with Monsieur Tronson after Monsieur de Chaalons had been with him.

" THERE was a meeting at Monsieur de Meaux's, where came the duke of Chevreuse, thinking he might be present at the conference, since I had requested it. Monsieur de Chaalons came in very good time, and I spoke to him with abundance of freedom and openness, and he not being at that time prepossessed with things against me, as by means of some he afterwards was, I had reason to believe he was well satisfied with me. I had the satisfaction and comfort to find that he approved of what I said.

" AFTER we had long waited there, towards night came Monsieur de Meaux, and when he had spoken a little to the company, he opened a packet of papers which he had brought with him, and told the duke of Chevreuse that, since the affair was a matter of doctrine and purely ecclesiastical, the judgment of which belonged only to bishops, he did not think it convenient for him to be present, as his presence might cramp their freedom. This was a mere put off, lest a witness of his reputation and

character should see what passed ; a witness too, that how subtle and dexterous soever Monsieur de Meaux might be in his management, he could not impose upon him ; for he was too well versed and knowing in the affair to be surprised, and too honest to be prevailed upon not to give testimony to the truth of facts.

" THE business of the conference was not the decision of a point of faith which belongs to the bishops ; but a peaceable inquiry into my sentiments, to see in what I exceeded, and if my expressions concerning matters of an inward life were conformable to approved mystical authors or not. For I had a great many times promised to submit to whatever those gentlemen should tell me was a point of faith and a *dogma*, about which I never pretended to dispute with them.

" BUT Monsieur de Meaux went on with his design, and would let nothing turn him out of the way. I was shocked at my very heart at this prelate's refusal, for I immediately saw the consequences of it, and was no longer in doubt of the engagement he had taken to condemn me. What could be more natural than the presence of a person of the duke's character, who had both merit and probity, and a good stock of learning ; through whose hands all had passed, and himself interested greatly in the clearing up of matters, that both he and others

might be undeceived if I had erred; and, against my intention instilled notions into them contrary to the purity of faith? I say what could have been more natural than to have had a witness of his character and reputation, who would have served to shame and confound me if I had spoken differently from what he at all times had been used to hear me speak; and he might have been undeceived himself, and instrumental in undeceiving others, if, by a quiet and peaceable conference, I had been shewn my errors. And this was the very thing designed when the examination was first proposed. But God did not permit it; and the duke of Chevreuse thought not proper to insist upon it, seeing Monsieur de Chaalons was silent; besides, what he did was in respect to me, and because I had signified how much I desired that he might be present.

"I REMAINED then alone with these two gentlemen. Monsieur de Meaux spoke a great while to prove that all Christians in common have the same grace. I was going to shew him how conformable my sentiments were with *approved* authors that had written of the inward life, but he would be continually saying that we ascribed too great a perfection to the inward life; and endeavoured to darken and puzzle all I said, especially when he perceived that Monsieur de Chaalons was touched, and

about to give in to what I said to him. Then I was told that the business was not to dispute, but to submit, and be ready to believe, and act according as I should be told.

" THIS conference was of no manner of service as to the main points in question. It only gave Monsieur de Meaux a pretence to tell Madame de Maintenon, that he had made the examination proposed ; and, having convinced me of my mistakes and errors, he hoped in time to bring me from them, if he could but engage me to go and spend some time in the convent at Meaux, where he should be more at leisure to finish what he had begun.

" MONSIEUR de Meaux not coming till towards night, as was observed before, I had a good opportunity of discoursing with Monsieur de Chaalons, in the presence of the duke of Chevreuse. This prelate appeared well satisfied with me, and told me, that I should do well to continue my manner of prayer, and that he would pray to God to give me more and more of his grace. And when Monsieur de Meaux grew warm afterwards in the debate, he would soften him as much as he could, and I saw plainly, that when he acted of himself, he did it with all the civility and justice he possibly could. But all that he could do was only to write down some of my answers, when I addressed myself to him ; for when Monsieur de Meaux grew

warm he would reflect upon me without hearkening to what I said. I had occasion after this to see Monsieur de Chaalons alone, and though, in the mean time they had tried to prejudice him against me, yet he appeared satisfied with the conference we had had, and repeated several times, that he saw no occasion to alter any thing in my way of prayer, nor in any thing else ; that I might go on, and that he would pray to God to augment his goodness towards me ; and that I might live privately as I had done two years before. Which I promised him to do.

" It was thought proper that I should speak to Monsieur Tronson. I went therefore to Issy, and the duke of Chevreuse was pleased to meet us there. Monsieur Tronson examined me more particularly than the other two had done ; and the duke of Chevreuse wrote down both the questions and answers. I spoke to him with all the freedom and openness imaginable. At last the duke observed, ' You see how sincere and upright she is.' He replied, ' I *feel* it very plainly.' That expression was worthy so great a servant of God as he was, who judged of my answers not only by his understanding, but by the *feeling* of his heart. I then took my leave, and Monsieur Tronson appeared well satisfied with me, notwithstanding they had sent him a counterfeit letter against me, said to come from a person who afterwards denied it.

"AFTER all these examinations, in which they appeared satisfied with me, who would not have supposed that I might have rested in quiet. But it proved quite otherwise, for the more my innocence appeared, the more those who undertook to render me criminal invented stratagems to compass their end. Things were on that footing when Monsieur de Meaux, (to whom I had offered to go and spend some time in a community belonging to his diocese, that he might be the better acquainted with me,) proposed my being with the nuns of St. Mary de Meaux. The offer I had made highly pleased him, for he thought, as I have been since told, that he should reap great advantage from it. Nay, he even told the Abbess Picard, that it would be as good to him as the archbishoprick of Paris, and a cardinal's cap.

"As soon as he had given orders, which was in the month of January, 1695, I went to the monastery of St. Mary de Meaux, and continued there until Easter without ever seeing Monsieur de Meaux. Upon his arrival he came into my chamber. I was then very ill. The first thing he said to me was that I had a great many enemies, and that every thing went against me. He brought me the articles which were drawn up at Issy. I desired him to explain some passages therein, and then signed them. A short time after he again entered my chamber. I was then confined to my bed. He

told me that I must then sign, that I did not believe the incarnation of the WORD. Several of the nuns were in the room close by and heard it. I was surprised at such a proposition, and told him that I could not sign a falsity. He then prayed and entreated me, and said, if I would do it he would clear up my reputation which some had endeavoured to blemish. I told him that God would take care of my reputation if he pleased, and would support me in my faith to the hazard of my life.

" A FEW days afterwards Monsieur de Meaux came again and brought me a paper written in his own hand, which was a profession of faith, intimating that I had always been Catholic, apostolic, and Roman; and that I had submitted my books to the church. He then read another paper which he said he would give me. This was a certificate much to my advantage.

" BEING at that time too ill to transcribe the paper of submission, he said I might get it transcribed by one of the nuns and sign it. He took with him his certificate, saying he would write it over fair, assuring me that when he had the one I should have the other, and that he would use me as his sister, and that if he did not he should be a knave. This carriage took with me, and I told him that I had put myself into his hands, not only as into the hands of a bishop, but a man of honour.

"AFTER he was gone I found myself so ill and faint, having talked too much, that they were obliged to give me some cordials to bring me to myself. The Abbess fearing if he should come again on the morrow that it would endanger my life, desired him by letter, to let me rest that day. But he would not. He came again and asked me if I had signed the writing he had left with me ; and, opening a letter case, he said, ' See, here is your certificate. Where is your submission ? ' He held a paper in his hand while he said this. I pointed to where the paper of submission lay, but had not strength to reach it to him. He thereupon took up the submission, and putting it, together with the certificate, into his letter case, told me he would give me no certificate ; that the affair was not yet ended ; that he would torment me further, and would have other things signed, and particularly, *that I believed not the incarnation of the Word.* Judge what a surprise I was then in. I had no strength left. He rushed out of the room. The nuns were shocked at his behaviour. He need not to have promised me a certificate, as I had never asked him for one.

"SOME time after this he came to me again, and required me to sign a pastoral letter of his, and acknowledge that I had held the errors condemned in it. I endeavoured to convince him that what I had already given him comprehended all manner of submission.

“ ‘ BUT,’ said he, ‘ you told me you would submit to my condemnation.’ ‘ I do it with all my heart, my lord,’ said I, ‘ and I concern myself no more in those little books than if I had never written them. If it pleases God, I will never depart from the submission and respect I owe you, let things go as they will ; but, my lord, you promised me a discharge.’

“ ‘ I WILL give it you,’ said he, ‘ when you have done what I would have you do.’ ‘ But, my lord,’ said I again, ‘ you did me the honour to tell me that if I gave you the paper of submission which you dictated to me, that you would give me a discharge.’ ‘ Yes,’ said he, ‘ but they were words of course, that dropped from me before I had maturely thought what can and ought to be done.’ ‘ I don’t tell you this, my lord,’ said I, ‘ by way of complaint, but only to put you in mind that you promised me a discharge. And to let you see my submission, I will write at the bottom of your pastoral letter all that I can well put there.’

“ WHEN I had done it, he told me that he thought it well enough, but when he had put it into his pocket, he said that was not the thing that was wanted. ‘ You do not say actually, and formally, that you are a heretic, and I will have you declare it; and, likewise that the letter is very true and just, and that you acknowledge yourself to have been in all the errors which it condemns.’

"I ANSWERED him, 'Surely, my lord, you only do this to try me; for I cannot believe that a prelate of so much piety and honour, will take advantage of the trust I reposed in him when I put myself into his hands and came into his diocese, to make me do things which in conscience I cannot do. I expected to have found a father in you. I beseech you do not let me be deceived therein.'

"'I AM,' said he, 'a father of the church, but it signifies nothing to talk. If you do not sign what I would have you, I will come with witnesses, and when I have admonished you before them, I will bring you before the church, and we will cut you off, as it is directed in the Gospel.'

"I REPLIED, 'My lord, I have only God for my witness; and am prepared to suffer all that you can do, and hope by his assistance to do nothing against my conscience, yet pay you all the respect due.'

"THE nuns who were shocked, though they had seen but a small part of his violence towards me, were afraid to return again. The Abbess told me that my great mildness made him treat me worse than he otherwise would, for his mind was of such a make that he commonly treated persons who were mild in a rough manner, but complied and yielded to those that had courage and spirit. However, I altered not my behaviour, but chose rather to bear his usage

than to do any thing contrary to the respect due to his character.

"SOMETIMES he would say that my enemies persuaded him to vex and torment me, but that he himself was satisfied with me. At other times he would come in great rage and fury, and ask me to sign those things which he knew I would not consent to; and threatened me with all I have since suffered. He would not, he said, lose his fortune for me, and a great many such like things. After these heats and passions he would return to Paris, and continue there a long time. At last, after I had been six months at Meaux he gave me a certificate, and required no more signing of papers."

THE nuns and Abbess of the convent whither she had retreated, (says an author of Fenelon's life), were affected at the cruelty of their bishop, and endeavoured to soften him by the testimony of Madame Guion's piety. He yielded at length to the force of truth; and, at the end of six months gave her a certificate, in which he declares, that he was satisfied with her conduct; that he continued to her the participation of the holy sacraments; that he had not found her any ways involved in the abominations of Molinos, or in any other heretofore condemned; and, in fine, that he had not meant to comprehend her in the mention made of those in his pastoral ordinances.

ANOTHER certificate was given to her by the Abbess and the nuns, in which they declare, that that lady having continued six months in their house had given them no cause of trouble or uneasiness; but, on the contrary, had set an example highly edifying; that, throughout her whole conduct, and in all her words, they observed a great regularity, simplicity, sincerity, humility, mortification, meekness, and Christian patience; and, a pious esteem for every part of the Catholic faith, and especially for the mystery of the incarnation and holy infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Two such authentic acts, after so rigorous an examination, and so much pains taken to make her appear criminal, displeased Madame de Maintenon to a very high degree. She told Monsieur de Meaux that the attestation he had given would have a contrary effect to what had been proposed, which was to undeceive those persons who were prepossessed in Madame Guion's favour.

IT was about this time that the contest began between the Abbe Fenelon and the bishop of Meaux. The former espoused the doctrine of pure love to God, as being the Christian's duty, independent of his hope of reward. The latter contended warmly against it; and, through his interest with the French king, succeeded in having the Abbe Fenelon disgraced.—

Though this may appear foreign to our subject, it is nevertheless a link in the chain of Madame Guion's persecutions; for, as we have already intimated, the bishop of Meaux could not brook the idea of having overlooked the tradition of the church in this particular, and the Abbe Fenelon, at that time archbishop of Cambrai, would not concede so important a point. Hence, in order to cast the greater odium upon Fenelon, he was accused of vindicating Madame Guion's cause from impure motives, with many other disreputable insinuations. And, the more effectually to involve *him* in disgrace and ruin, they again assailed that lady with all the calumny their ingenuity and hatred could invent. She was, in consequence, once more arrested; and, towards the close of the year 1695, confined in the castle of Vincennes.

"I HAD," says she, "several places of retreat offered me, but I accepted of none, that I might not bring any person into trouble, and that my friends and family might not be involved by my having my escape imputed to them. I therefore took a resolution not to leave Paris, but to abide there in some secret place, with my waiting woman, whom I could confide in, and so lie hid to the world. I spent my time in reading, prayer to God, and working. But at the end of the year 1695, I was arrested, though sick, and carried to Vincennes."

FROM Vincennes she was taken to Vaugirard, and from thence to the Bastile, whence she was at length liberated, after suffering ten years imprisonment. She then retired to Blois, where she lived for nearly twelve years, honoured and beloved by a large circle of friends, and died on the 9th of June, 1717, in the seventieth year of her age.—The Abbe Fenelon retained the greatest friendship and esteem for her until his death, which preceded her own but two years.

BEFORE we close this article it may be proper to observe, that, although this lady had the most powerful opposers and persecutors, who spared no pains to make her appear criminal, and who felt themselves much interested therein; yet, after the most rigorous examination of her whole life and doctrine, by an assembly of the Gallican church convened for that purpose, she was finally acquitted, and the world received public testimony of her innocence.—May this stand as an eternal monument of the triumph of *virtuous faith*,* united with a strict adherence to sound doctrine.

* We offer no apology for this expression.—We hear of some having the faith of devils.

A Short and Easy METHOD OF PRAYER.

From the French of

Madame J. M. B. de la Mothe Guion.

Translator's Preface.

THE following excellent book was the first essay of the truly pious Madame Guion; it was, quickly after its publication, dispersed through great part of France; and it proved the happy instrument of many conversions. Those who were athirst for righteousness, eagerly imbibed the simple and efficacious precepts it contains; and those who had already made advances in the divine life were convinced of the truth of their way, and found ample instructions how to proceed. None who were advocates for genuine piety, could be offended at it; as the most salutary instructions for the attainment of Christian perfection are enforced, without being blended with such matters of opinion as cause offence.

THROUGH the treatise, it is certain, that there are two fundamental truths taken for

granted, namely, THE FALL; and, THE REDEMPTION: and, indeed, whosoever doth not inwardly feel the former, cannot experience the benefit of the latter; he hath no business with this book, nor even with the Bible; “he is whole, and needeth not a physician.”

SHOULD but a few of my Christian brethren reap advantage from this attempt to bring to light a treasure that has lain so long hidden and unnoticed, it would be, not only an abundant recompence for any little trouble I may have had in the translation, but also an encouragement to publish some other pieces of this illuminated author.

T. D. B.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS little treatise, conceived in great simplicity, was not originally intended for publication: it was written for a few individuals, who were desirous to love God with their whole heart; some of whom, because of the profit they received in reading the manuscript, wished to obtain copies of it; and, on this account alone, it was committed to the press.

IT still remains in its original simplicity, without any censure on the various divine leadings of others: and we submit the whole to the judgment of those who are skilled and experienced in divine matters; requesting them, however, not to decide, without first entering into the main design of the author, which is to induce the world to love God, and to serve him with comfort and success, in a simple and easy manner, adapted to those who are unqualified for learned and deep researches; and are, indeed, incapable of any thing but a hearty desire to be truly devoted to God.

AN unprejudiced reader may find, hidden under the most common expressions,

secret unction, which will excite him to seek after that Sovereign Good, whom all should wish to enjoy.

IN speaking of the attainment of perfection, the word FACILITY is used; because God is, indeed, found with facility, when we seek him within ourselves. But, in contradiction to this, some, perhaps, may urge that passage in St. John, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me;" (Chap. vii. 34.) this apparent difficulty, however, is removed by another passage, where he, who cannot contradict himself, has said to all, "seek and ye shall find." (Matt. vii. 7.) It is true, indeed, that he who would seek God, and is yet unwilling to forsake his sins, shall not find him, because he seeks not aright; and, therefore, it is added, "Ye shall die in your sins." On the other hand, he, who diligently seeks God in his heart, and that he may draw near unto him sincerely forsakes his sin, shall infallibly find him.

A LIFE of piety appears so formidable, and the spirit of prayer of such difficult attainment, that most persons are discouraged from taking a single step towards it. The difficulties inseparable from all great undertakings, are, indeed, either nobly surmounted, or left to subsist in all their terrors, just as success is the object of despair or hope. I have, therefore, endeavoured to shew the facility of the method proposed

in this treatise, the great advantages to be derived from it, and the certainty of their attainment by those that faithfully persevere. O were we once truly sensible of the goodness of God toward his poor creatures, and of his infinite desire to communicate himself unto them, we should not affright ourselves with ideal monsters, nor despair of obtaining that good which he is so earnest to bestow: "He that spared not his "own son, but delivered him up for us all; "how shall he not, with him, also freely "give us all things?" (Rom. vii. 32.) But we want courage and perseverance; we have both, to a high degree, in our temporal concerns, but want them in "the one "thing needful." (Luke x. 42.)

If any think, that God is not easily to be found in this way of simple love and pure adherence, let them not, on my testimony, alter their opinion, but rather make trial of it; and their own experience will convince them, that the reality far exceeds all my representations of it.

BELOVED reader, peruse this little tract with an humble, sincere, and candid spirit, and not with an inclination to cavil and criticise, and you will not fail to reap some degree of profit from it. It was written with a hearty desire that you might wholly devote yourself to God; receive it then, with a like desire for your own perfection: for nothing more is intended by it than to in-

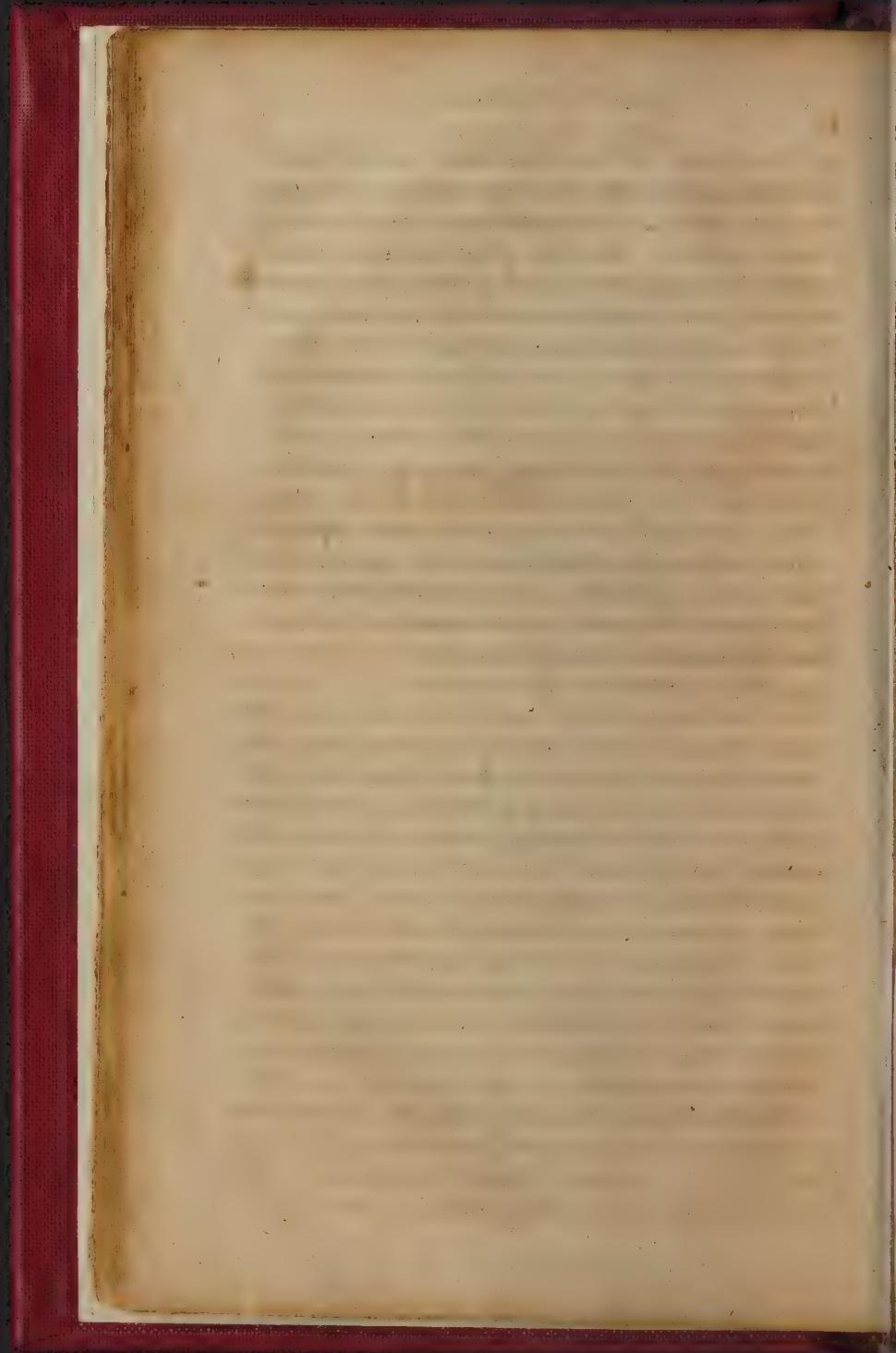
vite the simple and the child-like to approach their Father, who delights in the humble confidence of his children, and is grieved at the smallest instance of their diffidence or distrust. With a sincere desire, therefore, to forsake sin, seek nothing from the inartificial method here proposed, but *the love of God*, and you shall undoubtedly obtain it.

WITHOUT setting up our opinions above those of others, we mean only with truth and candour, to declare, from our own experience, and the experience of others, the happy effects produced by thus *simply following our Lord*.

As this treatise was intended only to instruct in prayer, there are many things which we respect and esteem, totally omitted, as not immediately relative to our main subject: it is, however, certain, that nothing will be found herein to disgust or offend, provided it be read in the spirit with which it was written; and, it is still more certain, that those who in right earnest make trial of the way, will find we have written THE TRUTH.

IT is thou alone, O Holy Jesus, who lovest simplicity and innocence, "and whose delight is to dwell with the children of men;"—(Prov. viii. 3.) with those who are, indeed, willing to become "Little children;" it is thou alone, who canst render this little work salutary! Imprint it then

on the hearts of all who read it, and lead them to seek thee within themselves, where thou reposest as in the manger, waiting to receive proofs of their love, and to give them testimony of thine. Yet, alas! they may still lose these unspeakable advantages by their negligence and insensibility! But it belongeth unto thee, O thou Increased Love! thou Silent and Eternal Word! it belongeth unto thee, to awake, attract, and convert; to make thyself be heard, tasted, and beloved! I know thou canst do it; and I trust thou wilt do it by this humble work, which belongeth entirely to thee, proceedeth wholly from thee, and tendeth only to thee! And, O most gracious and adorable Saviour!—to thee be all the glory!



A SHORT
AND
EASY METHOD OF PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

THAT ALL ARE CAPABLE OF PRAYER.

WHAT a dreadful delusion hath prevailed over the greater part of mankind, in supposing that they are not called to a state of prayer! whereas all are capable of prayer, and are called thereto, as all are called to and are capable of salvation.

PRAYER is the application of the heart to God, and the internal exercise of love. St. Paul hath enjoined us to "pray without ceasing;" (1 Thess. v. 17.) and our Lord saith, "I say unto you all, watch and pray:" (Mark xiii. 33, 37.) and all therefore may, and all ought to practise prayer. I grant that meditation is attainable but by few, for few are capable of it; and therefore my beloved brethren, who are athirst for salvation, meditative prayer is not the prayer which God requires of you, nor which we would recommend.

LET all pray: we should live by prayer, as we should live by love. "I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that ye may be rich;"—(Rev. iii. 8.) this is much

more easily obtained than ye can conceive. “ Come, all ye that are athirst, to these living waters;” nor lose your precious moments in “ hewing out cisterns that will hold no water.” (John vii. 37. Jerem. ii. 13.) Come, ye famishing souls who find nought whereon to feed; come and ye shall be fully satisfied! Come, ye poor afflicted ones, who groan beneath your load of wretchedness and pain, and ye shall find ease and comfort! Come, ye sick, to your physician, and be not fearful of approaching him, because you are filled with diseases; expose them to his view, and they shall be healed! Children draw near to your Father, and he will embrace you in the arms of love! Come ye poor stray wandering sheep, return to your shepherd! Come, sinners, to your Saviour! Come, ye dull ignorant and illiterate, ye who think yourselves the most incapable of prayer! ye are more peculiarly called and adapted thereto. Let all without exception come, for JESUS CHRIST hath called all. Yet, let not those come who are without a heart; they are not asked; for there must be a heart, that there may be love. But who is without a heart? O come, then, give this heart to God; and here learn how to make the donation. All who are desirous of prayer, may easily pray, enabled by those ordinary graces and gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT which are common to all men.

PRAYER is the guide to perfection, and

the Sovereign Good ; it delivers us from every vice, and obtains us every virtue ; for the one great means to become perfect is to walk in the presence of God : he himself hath said, “ walk in my presence and be ye “ perfect.”—(Gen. xvii. 1.) It is by prayer alone that we are brought into this presence, and maintained in it without interruption.

You must then learn a species of prayer, which may be exercised at all times ; which doth not obstruct outward employments ; and which may be equally practised by princes, kings, prelates, priests and magistrates, soldiers and children, tradesmen, labourers, women and sick persons : It cannot therefore, be the prayer of the head, but of the heart ; not a prayer of the understanding alone, which is so limited in its operations that it can have but one object at one time ; but the prayer of the heart is not interrupted by the exercise of reason : Indeed nothing can interrupt this prayer, but irregular and disordered affections : and when once we have tasted of God, and the sweetness of his love, we shall find it impossible to relish aught but himself.

NOTHING is so easily obtained as the possession and enjoyment of God, for “ in him we live, move, and have our being ;” and he is more desirous to give himself into us, than we can be to receive him ; and to seek aright, is easier and more natural to us than breathing. Though you think your-

selves ever so stupid, dull, incapable of sublime attainments, yet by prayer, you may live in God himself with less difficulty or interruption than you live in the vital air. Will it not be highly sinful to neglect prayer? but this I trust you will not, when you have learnt the method, which is exceedingly easy.

CHAPTER II.

THE METHOD OF PRAYING.

THERE are two ways of introducing a soul into prayer, which should for some time be pursued; the one is meditation, the other is reading accompanied with meditation.

MEDITATIVE reading is the choosing some important practical or speculative truth, always preferring the practical, and proceeding thus: whatever truth you have chosen, read only a small portion of it, endeavouring to taste and digest it, to extract the essence and substance thereof, and proceed no farther while any savour or relish remains in the passage: when this subsides, take up your book again, and proceed as before, seldom reading more than half a page at a time; for it is not the quantity that is read, but the manner of reading, that yields us profit. Those who read fast, reap no more advantage than a bee would

by only skimming over the surface of the flower, instead of waiting to penetrate into it, and extract its sweets. Much reading is rather for scholastic subjects, than divine truths: indeed, to receive real profit from spiritual books, we must read as I have described; and I am certain if that method were pursued, we should become gradually habituated to, and more fully disposed for prayer.

MEDITATION which is the other method, is to be practised at an appropriated season, and not in the time of reading. I believe the best manner of meditating is as follows. When by any act of lively faith, you are placed in the presence of GOD, recollect some truth wherein there is substance and food: pause gently and sweetly thereon, not to employ the reason, but merely to calm and fix the mind: for you must observe, that your particular exercise should ever be the presence of GOD; your subject therefore, should rather serve to stay the mind, than exercise the understanding. From this procedure, it will necessarily follow, that the lively faith in a GOD immediately present in our inmost soul, will produce an eager and vehement pressing inwardly into ourselves, and restraining all our senses from wandering abroad: this serves to extricate us speedily from numberless distractions, to remove us far from external objects, and to bring us nigh unto our GOD, who is only

to be found in our inmost centre, which is the Holy of Holies wherein he dwelleth. He hath even promised “to come and make “his abode with him that doth his will.” (John xiv. 23.) St. Augustine accuses himself of wasting his time, by not having from the first sought God in this manner of prayer.

WHEN we are thus fully introverted, and warmly penetrated throughout with a lively sense of the Divine Presence; when the senses are all recollected, and withdrawn from the circumference to the centre, and the soul is sweetly and silently employed on the truths we have read, not in reasoning, but in the feeding thereon, and animating the will by affection, rather than fatiguing the understanding by study; when, I say, the affections are in this state, which, however difficult it may appear at first, is, as I shall hereafter shew, easily attainable; we must allow them sweetly to repose, and peacefully to drink in that of which they have tasted: for as a person may enjoy the flavour of the finest viand in mastication, yet receive no nourishment therefrom, if he does not cease the action and swallow the food; so, when our affections are enkindled, if we endeavour to stir them up yet more, we extinguish the flame, and the soul is deprived of its nourishment; we should, therefore, in stillness and repose, with respect, confidence, and love, swallow the blessed food of which we have tasted: this method

is, indeed, highly necessary ; and will advance the soul better in a short time, than any other in a course of years.

I HAVE mentioned, that our direct and principal exercise should consist in the contemplation of the Divine Presence ; we should be also exceedingly watchful and diligent in recalling our dissipated senses, as the most easy method of overcoming distractions ; for a direct contest and opposition only serves to irritate and augment them ; whereas, by sinking down under a sense and perception of a present God, and by simply turning inwards, we wage insensibly a very advantageous, though indirect war with them.

IT is proper here to caution beginners against wandering from truth to truth, and from subject to subject : the right way to penetrate every divine truth, to enjoy its full relish, and to imprint it on the heart, is dwelling on it whilst its savour continues.

THOUGH recollection is difficult in the beginning, from the habit the soul has acquired of being always from home ; yet, when by the violence it hath done itself, it becometh a little accustomed to it, it will soon be rendered perfectly easy, and become delightful. Such is the experimental taste, and sense of his Presence, and such the efficacy of those graces, which that God bestows, whose One Will towards his creatures is to communicate himself unto them !

CHAPTER III.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE WHO ARE
WHOLLY ILLITERATE.

THOSE who have not learned to read, are not, on that account, excluded from prayer; for the great book which teacheth all things, and which is legible as well internally as externally; is JESUS CHRIST himself.

THE method they should practise is this: They should first learn this fundamental rule, that "the kingdom of God is with—" in them;—(Luke xvii. 21.) and that it is there only it must be sought.

IT is as incumbent on the clergy to instruct their parishioners in prayer, as in their catechism. It is true they tell them the end of their creation; but should they not give them sufficient instructions how they may attain it? They should be taught to begin by an act of profound adoration and abasement before God; and, closing the corporeal eyes, endeavour to open those of the soul; they should then collect themselves inwardly, and by a lively faith in God, as dwelling within them, pierce into the Divine Presence; not suffering the senses to wander abroad, but withholding them as much as may be in due subjection.

THEY should then repeat the Lord's Prayer, in their native tongue; pondering

a little upon the meaning of the words, and the infinite willingness of that God who dwells within them, to become indeed "their Father." In this state let them pour out their wants before him; and, when they have pronounced the endearing word, "Father," remain a few moments in a respectful silence, waiting to have the will of this their heavenly Father made manifest unto them. Again, beholding themselves in the state of a feeble child, sorely bruised by repeated falls, and defiled in the mire, destitute of strength to keep up, or of power to cleanse themselves, they should lay their deplorable situation open to their Father's view in humble confusion; now sighing out a few words of love and plaintive sorrow, and again sinking into profound silence before him. Then continuing the Lord's Prayer, let them beseech this King of Glory to reign in them, yielding to his love the just claim he has over them, and resigning up themselves wholly to his divine government.

If they feel an inclination to peace and silence, let them continue the words of the prayer so long as this sensation holds; and when it subsides go on with the second petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!" upon which these humble supplicants must beseech God to accomplish in them, and by them, all his will; and must surrender their hearts and freedom into his hands, to be disposed of as he

pleaseth. And, finding that the best employment of the will is to love, they should desire to love God with all their strength, and implore him for his pure love; but all this sweetly and peacefully: and so of the rest of the prayer, in which the clergy may instruct them. But they should not overburthen themselves with frequent repetitions of set forms, or studied prayers; (Matt. vi. 7.) for the Lord's Prayer once repeated as I have just described, will produce abundant fruit.

AT other times they should place themselves as sheep before their shepherd, looking up to him for their true substantial food: "O Divine Shepherd, thou feedest thy flock "with thyself, and art indeed, their daily "nourishment!" They may also represent unto him the necessities of their families: but all upon this principle, and in this one great view of faith, that "God is within "them."

THE ideas we form of the Divine Being fall infinitely short of what he is: a lively faith in his presence is sufficient: for we must not form any image of the Deity; though we may of the second person in the ever-blessed TRINITY, beholding him in the various states of his incarnation, from his birth to his crucifixion, or in some other state or mystery, provided the soul always seeks for those views in its inmost ground or centre. Again, we may look to him as

our physician, at present to his healing influence of all our maladies; but always without violence or perturbation; and from time to time with pauses of silence, that, being intermingled with the action, the silence may be gradually extended, and our own exertion lessened; till at length, by continually yielding to God's operations, they gain the complete ascendency, as shall be hereafter explained.

WHEN the Divine Presence is granted us, and we gradually relish silence and repose, this experimental feeling and taste of the presence of God introduces the soul into the second degree of prayer, which, by proceeding in the manner I have described, is attainable as well by the illiterate as the learned: some favoured souls indeed are indulged with it, even from the beginning.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SECOND DEGREE OF PRAYER.

SOME call the second degree of prayer, "The Prayer of Contemplation;" "The Prayer of Faith and Stillness;" and others call it, "The Prayer of Simplicity." I shall here use this latter appellation, as being more just than either of the former, which imply a much more exalted state of prayer than that I am now treating of.

WHEN the soul has been for some time

exercised in the way I have mentioned, she finds that she is gradually enabled to approach God with facility; that recollection is attended with much less difficulty; and, that prayer becomes easy, sweet, and delightful: she knows that this is the *true* way of finding God; and she feels “his name is as ointment poured forth.”—(Cant. i. 3.) But the method must now be altered, and that which I prescribe, followed with courage and fidelity, without being disturbed at the difficulties we may encounter therein.

FIRST, as soon as the soul by faith places herself in “the presence of God,” and becomes recollected before him, let her remain thus for a little time in a profound and respectful silence.

BUT if, at the beginning, in forming her act of faith she feels some little pleasing sense of the Divine Presence; let her remain there without being troubled for a subject, and proceed no farther, but carefully cherish this sensation while it continues: as soon as it abates, she may excite the will by some tender affection; and if, by the first moving thereof, she finds herself reinstated in her sweet peace, let her there remain: the smothered fire must be gently fanned, but as soon as it is kindled, we must cease that effort, lest we extinguish it by our own activity. I would warmly recommend it to all, never to finish prayer without remaining some little time after in a respectful silence.

It is also of the greatest importance for the soul to go to prayer with courage; and, with such a pure and disinterested love, as seeks nothing from God but the ability to please him, and to do his will: for a servant who only proportions his diligence to his hope of reward, renders himself unworthy of all reward. Go then to prayer, not that ye may enjoy spiritual delights, but that ye may be either full or empty, just as it pleaseth God: this will preserve you in an evenness of spirit, in desertion as well as in consolation, and prevent your being surprised at aridity or the apparent repulses of God.

CHAPTER V.

OF SPIRITUAL ARIDITY.

THOUGH God hath no other desire than to impart himself to the loving soul that seeks him, yet he frequently conceals himself from her, that she may be roused from sloth, and impelled to seek him with fidelity and love. But with what abundant goodness doth he recompense the faithfulness of his beloved! And how sweetly are these apparent withdrawals of himself succeeded by the consoling caresses of love! At these seasons, we are apt to believe, either that it proves our fidelity, and

evinces a greater ardour of affection, to seek him by an exertion of our own strength and activity ; or, that this exertion will induce him the more speedily to revisit us. No, no, my dear souls, believe me this is not the right procedure in this degree of prayer : with patient love, with self-abasement and humiliation, with the reiterated breathings of an ardent but peaceful affection, and with silence full of the most profound respect, you must wait the return of the Beloved: thus only you will demonstrate, that it is himself alone, and his good pleasure, that you seek: and not the selfish delights of your own sensations. Hence it is said, (Eccles. ii. 2, 3.) “ Be not impatient in the time of dryness and obscurity ; suffer the suspensions and delays of the consolations of GOD; cleave unto him, and wait upon him patiently, that thy life may increase and be renewed.”

BE ye, therefore, patient in prayer, though, during life, you can do nought else, than wait the return of the Beloved, in deep humiliation, calm contentment, and patient resignation to his will. And yet, how this most excellent prayer may be intermingled with the sighings of plaintive love ! This conduct indeed, is most pleasing to the heart of Jesus ; and, above all others, will, as it were, compel him to return.

CHAPTER VI.

OF ABANDONMENT, OR RESIGNATION.

IT is now we should begin to abandon and give up our whole existence unto GOD, from the strong and positive conviction, that the occurrence of every moment is agreeable to his immediate will and permission, and just such as our state requires. This conviction will make us resigned in all things; and accept of all that happens, not as from the creature, but as from GOD himself.

BUT I conjure you, my dearly beloved, who sincerely wish to give up yourselves to GOD, that after you have made the donation, you will not snatch yourself back again: remember, a gift once presented, is no longer at the disposal of the donor.

ABANDONMENT is a matter of the greatest importance in our process; it is the key to the inner court; so that whosoever knoweth truly how to abandon himself, soon becomes perfect: we must, therefore, continue stedfast and immovable therein; nor listen to the voice of natural reason. Great faith produces great abandonment: we must confide in GOD, "hoping against hope"—(Rom. iv. 18.)

ABANDONMENT is the casting off all selfish care, that we may be altogether at

the divine disposal. All Christians are exhorted to this resignation; for it is said to all, "Be not anxious for to-morrow; for your heavenly Father knoweth all that is necessary for you."—(Matt. xx. 25.) "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—(Prov. iii. 6.) "Commit thy ways unto the LORD and thy thoughts shall be established."—(Prov. xvi. 3.) "Commit thy ways unto the LORD, and he himself will bring it to pass."—(Psalm xxxvi. 6.)

OUR abandonment then should be as fully applied to external as internal things, giving up all our concerns into the hands of GOD, forgetting ourselves and thinking only of him; by which the heart will remain always disengaged, free, and at peace. It is practised by continually losing our own will in the will of God; by renouncing every particular inclination as soon as it arises, however good it may appear, that we may stand in indifference with respect to ourselves, and only will that which GOD from eternity had willed; by being resigned in all things, whether for soul or body, whether for time or eternity; by leaving what is past in oblivion, what is to come to Providence, and devoting the present moment to GOD, which brings with itself GOD's eternal order, and is as infallible a declaration to us of his will as it is inevitable and common to all; by attributing

nothing that befalls us to the creature, but regarding all things in God, and looking upon all, excepting only our sins, as infallibly proceeding from him. Surrender yourselves then to be led and disposed of just as God pleaseth, with respect both to your outward and inward state.

CHAPTER VII.

OF SUFFERINGS.

BE ye patient under all the sufferings which God is pleased to send you: if your love to him be pure, you will not seek him less on Calvary, than on Tabor; and surely, he should be as much loved on that as on this, since it was on Calvary he made the greater display of his own love for you.

BE not like those, who give themselves to him at one season, and withdraw from him at another: they give themselves only to be caressed: and wrest themselves back again when they come to be crucified, or at least turn for consolation to the creature.

No, beloved souls, ye will not find consolation in aught but in the love of the cross, and in total abandonment; "Who savoureth not the cross; savoureth not the things that be of God."—Matt. xvi. 23. It is impossible to love God without loving the cross; and a heart that savours the

cross, finds the bitterest things to be sweet: “A famished soul findeth bitter things sweet:” (Job vi. 1.) because she findeth herself an hungered for her God, in proportion as she findeth herself an hungered for the cross. GOD giveth the cross, and the cross giveth us GOD.

WE may be assured, that there is an internal advancement, where there is an advancement in the way of the cross: Abandonment and the cross go hand in hand together.

As soon as any thing presents itself as a suffering, and you feel a repugnance against it, resign yourself immediately unto GOD with respect to it, and give yourself up to him in sacrifice; you shall find, that when the cross arrives, it will not be so very burdensome, because you had disposed yourself to a willing reception of it. This, however, does not prevent you from feeling its weight as some have imagined: for when we do not feel the cross, we do not suffer it. A sensibility of sufferings constitutes a principal part of the sufferings themselves. JESUS CHRIST himself was willing to suffer its utmost rigours. We often bear the cross in weakness, at other times in strength: all should be equal to us in the will of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF MYSTERIES.

IT may be objected, that by this method, we shall have no mysteries imprinted on our minds: but it is quite the reverse: for it is the peculiar means of imparting them to the soul. JESUS CHRIST, to whom we are abandoned, and whom "we follow as the way, whom we hear as the truth, and who animates us as the life," (John xiv. 6.) in imprinting himself on the soul, impresses the characters of his different states; and to bear all the states of JESUS CHRIST, is far more sublime, than merely to reason concerning them. St. Paul bore in his body the states of JESUS CHRIST: "I bear in my body," says he, "the marks of the LORD JESUS;" (Gal. vi. 17.) but he does not say that he reasoned thereon.

IN our acts of resignation, JESUS CHRIST frequently communicates some peculiar views, or revelations of his states: these we should thankfully receive, and dispose ourselves for what appeareth to be his will. Indeed, having no other choice, but that of ardently reaching after him, of dwelling ever with him, and of sinking into nothingness before him, we should accept indiscriminately all his dispensations,

whether obscurity or illumination, fecundity or barrenness, imbecility or strength, sweetness or bitterness, temptations, distractions, pain, weariness, or doubtings; and none of all these should, for one moment, retard our course. God engages some, for whole years, in the contemplation and enjoyment of a particular mystery: the simple view or contemplation of which gathers the soul inward, provided it be faithful: but as soon as God is pleased to withdraw this view from the soul, it should freely yield to the deprivation. Some are very uneasy at seeing their inability to meditate on certain mysteries; but this disquietude hath no just foundation, since an affectionate attachment to God includes in itself every species of devotion: for who-soever, in repose and quiet is united to God alone, is, indeed, most excellently and effectually applied to every divine mystery: the love of God comprehends in itself, the love of all that appertains to him.

CHAPTER IX.

OF VIRTUE.

IT is thus we acquire virtue with facility and certainty; for, as God is the fountain and principle of all virtue, we possess all in the possession of himself; and,

in proportion as we approach toward his possession, in like proportion do we rise into the most eminent virtues. For all virtue is but a mask, an outside appearance mutable as our garments, if it doth not spring up, and then indeed it is genuine, essential, and permanent: "The beauty of the king's daughter proceeds from within," saith David.—Psalm xlv. 14. These souls above all others practise virtue in the most eminent degree, though they advert not to any particular virtue; God, to whom they are united, carries them to the most extensive practice of it; he is exceedingly jealous over them, and prohibits them the taste of any pleasure but in himself. What a hungering for sufferings have those souls, who thus glow with divine love? how prone to precipitate into excessive austerities, were they permitted to pursue their own inclinations! They think of nought save how they may please their Beloved: as their self-love abates, they neglect and forget themselves; and as their love to God increases, so do self-detestation and disregard to the creature. O was this easy method acquired, a method so suited to all, to the dull and ignorant as well as to the acute and learned, how easily would the whole church of God be reformed! Love only is required: "Love," saith St. Austin, "and then do what you please."

For when we truly love, we cannot have so much as a will to any thing that might offend the object of our affections.

CHAPTER X.

OF MORTIFICATION.

I WILL even affirm, that, in any other way, it is next to an impossibility to acquire a perfect mortification of the senses and passions. The reason is obvious; the soul gives vigour and energy to the senses, and the senses raise and stimulate the passions: a dead body has neither sensations, nor passions, because its connection with the soul is dissolved.

ALL endeavours merely to rectify the exterior, impel the soul yet farther outward into that about which she is so warmly and zealously engaged. It is in these matters, that her powers are diffused and scattered abroad; for her application being immediately directed to austerities, and other externals, she thus invigorates those very senses she is aiming to subdue. For the senses have no other spring from whence to derive their vigour than the application of the soul to themselves; the degree of their life and activity is proportioned to the degree of attention which the soul bestows upon them; and this life of the

senses stirs up and provokes the passions, instead of suppressing or subduing them: austerities may, indeed, enfeeble the body, but for the reasons just mentioned, can never take off the keenness of the senses, or lessen their activity. The one only method to effect this, is inward recollection; by which the soul is turned, wholly and altogether inward, to possess a present God. If she directs all her vigour and energy towards this centre of her being, the simple act separates and withdraws her from the senses; the exercising all her powers internally, leaves them faint and impotent; and the nearer she draws to God, the farther is she separated from the senses, and the less are the passions influenced by them.

HENCE it is, that those, in whom the attractions of grace are very powerful, find the outward man altogether weak and feeble, and even liable to faintings. I do not mean, by this, to discourage mortification, for it should ever accompany prayer, according to the strength and state of the person, or as obedience will allow. But I say, that mortification should not be our principal exercise; nor should we prescribe ourselves such and such austerities, but follow simply and merely the internal attractions of grace; and being possessed and occupied with the Divine Presence, (without thinking particularly on mortification), God

will enable us to perform every species of it; and most assuredly, he will give no relaxation to those who abide faithful in their abandonment to him, until he has mortified in them every thing that remains to be mortified. We have only then to continue stedfast in the utmost attention to God, and all things will be rightly performed. All are not capable of outward austerities, but all are capable of this. In the mortification of the eye and ear, which continually supply the busy imagination with new subjects, there is little danger of falling into excess; but God will teach us this also, and we have only to follow where his Spirit guides.

THE soul has a double advantage by proceeding thus: for, in withdrawing from outward objects, she draws the nearer to God; and in approaching him, besides the secret sustaining and preserving power and virtue she receives, she is farther removed from sin, the nearer her approaches are made; so that conversion becomes habitual.

CHAPTER XI.

OF CONVERSION.

"BE ye truly converted unto that God from whom ye have so deeply revolted."—Isa. xxxi. 6. To be truly con-

verted is to avert wholly from the creature, and turn wholly unto God.

FOR the attainment of salvation, it is absolutely necessary that we should forsake outward sin, and turn unto righteousness: but this alone is not perfect conversion, which consists in a total change of the whole man from an outward to an inward life.

WHEN the soul is once turned to God, she finds a wonderful facility in continuing stedfast in her conversion; and the longer she remains thus converted, the nearer she approaches, and the more firmly she adheres to God; and, the nearer she draws to him, of necessity she is the farther removed from the creature, which is so contrary to him: so that she is so effectually established and rooted in her conversion, that it becomes habitual, and as it were natural to her. Now we must not suppose that this is effected by a violent exertion of her own powers; for she is not capable of, nor should she attempt any other co-operation with divine grace, than that of endeavouring to withdraw herself from external objects, and to turn inwards: after which she has nothing farther to do than to continue stedfast in her adherence to God.

GOD has an attractive virtue, which draws the soul more and more powerfully to himself, the nearer she approaches towards him; and, in attracting, he purifies

and refines her ; just as it is with a gross vapour exhaled by the sun, which, as it gradually ascends, is rarefied and rendered pure : the vapour indeed, contributes to its exhalation only by its passiveness ; but the soul co-operates with the attractions of her God, by a free and affectionate correspondence. This kind of introversion is both easy and efficacious, advancing the soul naturally, and without constraint, *because God himself is her centre.*

EVERY centre has a powerful attractive virtue ; and the more pure and exalted it is, the stronger and more irresistible are its attractions. But, besides the potent magnetism of the centre itself, there is, in every creature, a correspondent tendency to reunion with its peculiar centre, which is vigorous and active in proportion to the spirituality and perfection of the subject.

As soon as any thing is turned towards its centre, its own gravitation instigates and accelerates it thereto, unless it be withheld by some invincible obstacle : a stone held in the hand is no sooner disengaged, than by its own weight it falls to the earth as to its centre ; so also water and fire, when unobstructed, tend and flow incessantly to their principle or centre. Now when the soul, by its efforts to abandon outward objects, and gather herself inwards, is brought into the influence of the central tendency, without any other exertion, she falls gradually, by

the weight of divine love, into her proper centre ; and the more passive and tranquil she remains, and the freer from self-motion and self-exertion, the more rapidly she advances, because the energy of the central attractive virtue is un-obstructed, and has full liberty for action.

ALL our care and attention should, therefore, be to acquire inward recollection : nor let us be discouraged by the pains and difficulties we encounter in this exercise, which will soon be recompensed, on the part of our God, by such abundant supplies of grace as will render the exercise perfectly easy, provided we be faithful in meekly withdrawing our hearts from outward distractions and occupations, and returning to our centre, with affections full of tenderness and serenity. When at any time the passions are turbulent, a gentle retreat inwards unto a present God, easily deadens and pacifies them ; and any other way of contending with them, rather irritates than appeases them.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE PRAYER OF THE SIMPLE PRESENCE OF GOD.

THE soul that is faithful in the exercise of love and adherence to God above described, is astonished to feel him gradually taking possession of her whole be-

ing; she now enjoys a continual sense of that Presence, which has become as it were natural to her; and this, as well as prayer, is the result of habit. She feels an unusual serenity gradually diffusing itself throughout all her faculties; and silence now wholly constitutes her prayer; whilst God communicates an infused love, which is the beginning of ineffable blessedness. O that I were permitted to pursue this subject, and describe some degrees of the endless progression of subsequent states! But I now write only for beginners; and shall, therefore, proceed no farther, but wait our LORD's time for publishing what may be applicable to every conceivable degree of "stature in CHRIST JESUS."

WE must, however, urge it as a matter of the highest import, to cease from self-action and self-exertion, that God himself may act alone: he saith by the mouth of his prophet David, "Be still and know that I am GOD."—Psa. xlvi. 10. But the creature is so infatuated with a love and attachment to its own working, that it doth not perceive and distinguish all its operations. She is ignorant that her inability minutely to observe the manner of her motion, is occasioned by the swiftness of her progress; and that the operations of God, in extending and diffusing their influence, absorb those of the creature. The stars may be seen distinctly before the sun

rises; but as his light advances, their rays are gradually absorbed by his; and they become invisible, not from the want of light in themselves, but from the superior effulgence of their chief luminary.

THE case is similar here; for there is a strong and universal light which absorbs all the little distinct lights of the soul; they grow faint and disappear under its powerful influence, and self-activity is now no longer distinguishable: yet those greatly err, who accuse this prayer of idleness, a charge that can only arise from inexperience. If they would but make some efforts towards the attainment of this prayer, they would soon experience the contrary of what they suppose, and find their accusation groundless.

THIS appearance of inaction is, indeed, not the consequence of sterility and want, but of fruitfulness and abundance; which will be clearly perceived by the experienced soul, who will know and feel that her silence is full and unctuous, and the result of causes totally the reverse of apathy and barrenness. There are two kinds of people that keep silence; the one because they have nothing to say, the other because they have too much: it is so with the soul in this state; her silence is occasioned by the super-abundance of matter, too great for utterance.

To be drowned, and to die of thirst, are deaths widely different; yet water may, in

some sense, be said to cause both; abundance destroys in one case, and want in the other. So in this state the abundance and overflowing of grace still the activity of self; and therefore, it is of the utmost importance to remain as silent as possible.

THE infant hanging at the mother's breast, is a lively illustration of our subject: it begins to draw the milk, by moving its little lips; but when the milk flows abundantly, it is content to swallow, and suspend its suction; by doing otherwise, it would only hurt itself, spill the milk, and be obliged to quit the breast.

WE must act in like manner in the beginning of prayer, by exerting the lip of the affections; but as soon as the milk of divine grace flows freely, we have nothing to do, but, in repose and stillness, sweetly to imbibe it; and when it ceases to flow, we must again stir up the affections as the infant moves its lips. Whoever acts otherwise, cannot turn this grace to advantage; which is bestowed to allure and draw the soul into the repose of Love, and not into the multiplicity of Self.

BUT what becometh of this child, who gently and without motion drinketh in the milk? Who could believe that it can thus receive nourishment? Yet, the more peacefully it feeds, the better it thrives. What, I say, becomes of this infant? It drops gently asleep on its mother's bosom. So the soul

that is tranquil and peaceful in prayer, sinketh frequently into a mystic slumber, wherein all her powers are at rest ; till at length she is wholly fitted for that state, of which she enjoys these transient anticipations. In this process the soul is led naturally, without effort, art, or study.

THE interior is not a strong hold, to be taken by storm and violence ; but a kingdom of peace, which is to be gained only by LOVE.

IF any will thus pursue the little path I have pointed out, it will lead them to infused prayer. God demands nothing extraordinary nor difficult ; on the contrary, he is best pleased by a simple and child-like conduct.

THAT which is most sublime and elevated in religion, is the easiest attained : the most necessary sacraments are the least difficult. It is thus also in natural things : if you would go to sea, embark on a river, and you will be conveyed to it insensibly and without exertion. Would you go to God, follow this sweet and simple path, and you will arrive at the desired object, with an ease and expedition that will amaze you. O that you would but once make the trial ! how soon would you find that all I have advanced falls short of the reality, and that your own experience will carry you infinitely beyond it ! Is it fear that prevents you from instantly casting

yourself into those arms of love, which were widely extended on the cross only to receive you? Whence can your fears arise? What risk do you run in depending solely on your God, and abandoning yourself wholly unto him? Ah! he will not deceive you, unless by bestowing an abundance beyond your highest hopes: but those who expect all from themselves, will inevitably be deceived, and must suffer this rebuke of God by his prophet Isaiah, " Ye have wearied yourselves in the multiplicity of your ways, and have not said, Let us rest in peace." — Isa. lvii. 10. vulgate.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF REST BEFORE GOD.

THE soul advanced thus far, hath no need of any other preparative than its quietude: for now the presence of God, which is the great effect, or rather continuation of prayer, begins to be infused, and almost without intermission. The soul certainly enjoys transcendent blessedness, and feels that " it is no longer she that lives, but CHRIST that liveth in her;" and that the only way to find him is introversion. She no sooner closeth her bodily eyes than she is wrapt up in prayer: she is amazed at so great a blessing, and enjoys an internal

converse, which external matters cannot interrupt. The same may be said of this species of prayer, that is said of wisdom : “ All good things come together with her.” —Wisdom vii. 11. For the virtues flow from this soul into exertion with so much sweetness and facility, that they appear natural and spontaneous : and the living spring within breaks forth so freely and abundantly into all goodness, that she becomes even insensible to evil. Let her then remain faithful in this state ; and be aware of choosing or seeking any other disposition whatsoever than this simple rest, as a preparative either to confession or communion, to action or prayer : for her sole business is to expand herself for the full reception of the divine infusions. I would not be understood to speak of the preparation necessary for the sacraments, but of the most perfect dispositions in which they can be received.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF INTERNAL SILENCE.

“ THE Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.” (Hab. ii. 20.) Inward silence is absolutely indispensable, because THE WORD is essential and eternal, and necessarily requires dispositions in the soul in some degree cor-

respondent to his nature, as a capacity for the reception of himself. Hearing is a sense formed to receive sounds, and is rather passive than active, admitting, but not communicating sensation; and if we would hear, we must lend the ear for that purpose: so, CHRIST THE ETERNAL WORD, without whose divine inspeaking the soul is dead, dark, and barren, when he would speak within us, requires the most silent attention to his all-quicken ing and efficacious voice.

HENCE it is so frequently enjoined us in Sacred Writ, to hear and be attentive to the voice of GOD: of the numerous exhortations to this effect, I shall quote a few: "Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation!" (Isa. li. 4.) and again, "Hear me, all ye whom I carry in my bosom, and bear within my bowels:" (Isa. xlvi. 3.) and farther, by the Psalmist, "Hearken, O daughter! and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty."—Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

WE should forget ourselves, and all self-interest, and listen and be attentive to the voice of our GOD; and these two simple actions, or rather passive dispositions, attract his love to that beauty which he himself communicates. Outward silence is very requisite for the cultivation and improvement

of inward ; and, indeed, it is impossible we should become truly internal, without the love and practice of outward silence and retirement. God saith, by the mouth of his prophet, " I will lead her into solitude, and there will I speak to her heart :" (Hos. ii. 14. vulg.) and unquestionably the being internally engaged with God, is wholly incompatible with being busied and employed in the numerous trifles that surround us.

—Luke xxxviii. 42.

WHEN through imbecility or unfaithfulness we become dissipated, or as it were un-centred, it is of immediate importance to turn again gently and sweetly inward ; and thus we may learn to preserve the spirit and unction of prayer throughout the day ; for if prayer and recollection were wholly confined to any appointed half-hour, or hour, we should reap but little fruit.

CHAPTER XV.

OF CONFESSION AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

SELF-EXAMINATION should always precede confession, and in the nature and manner of it should be conformable to the state of the soul : the business of those that are advanced to the degree of which we now treat, is to lay their whole souls open before God, who will not fail to en-

lighten them, and enable them to see the peculiar nature of their faults. This examination, however, should be peaceful and tranquil; and we should depend on God for the discovery and knowledge of our sins, rather than on the diligence of our own scrutiny.

WHEN we examine with constraint, and in the strength of our own endeavours, we are easily deceived and betrayed by self-love into error; "we believe the evil good, and the good evil:" (Isa. v. 20.) but when we lie in full exposure before the Sun of Righteousness, his divine beams render the smallest atoms visible. It follows from hence, that we must forsake self, and abandon our souls to God, as well in examination as confession.

WHEN souls have attained to this species of prayer, no fault escapes reprehension; on every commission they are instantly rebuked by an inward burning and tender confusion! Such is the scrutiny of him who suffers no evil to be concealed; and under its purifying influence, the one way is to turn affectionately to our Judge, and bear with meekness the pain and correction he inflicts. He becomes the incessant examiner of the soul; she can now indeed, no longer examine herself; and if she be faithful in her resignation, experience will convince her, that she is a thousand times more effectually examined by

his Divine Light, than by her own most active and vigorous inspection.

THOSE who tread these paths should be informed of a matter respecting their confession,* in which they are apt to err. When they begin to give an account of their sins, instead of the regret and contrition they had been accustomed to feel, they find that love and tranquillity sweetly pervade and take possession of their souls: now those who are not properly instructed, are desirous of withdrawing from this sensation, to form an act of contrition; because they have heard, and with truth, that it is requisite: but they are not aware, that they lose thereby the genuine contrition, which is this infused love, infinitely surpassing any effect produced by self-exertion, and comprehending the other acts in itself as in one principal act, in much higher perfection than if they were distinctly perceived, and varied in their sensation. Be not then troubled about other things, when God acts so excellently in you and for you.

To hate sin in this manner, is to hate it as God does. The purest love is that which is of his immediate operation in the soul: why should she then be so eager for action? Let her remain in the state he

* Though this instruction relates immediately to the customs of the Romish church, it is however very applicable to enlightened souls on their approaching the Lord's table, and other seasons of solemn confession.

assigns her, agreeably to the instructions of Solomon: "Put your confidence in God; remain in quiet where he hath placed you." —Eccles. xi. 22.

THE soul will also be amazed at finding a difficulty in calling her faults to remembrance: this, however, should cause no uneasiness; first, because this forgetfulness of our faults is some proof of our purification from them; and in this degree of advancement it is best: secondly, because, when confession is our duty, God will not fail to make known to us our greatest faults; for then he himself examines; and the soul will feel the end of examination more perfectly accomplished than it could possibly have been by the utmost exertion of our own endeavours.

THESE instructions, however, would be altogether unsuitable to the preceding degrees, while the soul continues in her active state; wherein it is right and necessary she should in all things use her utmost industry, in proportion to the degree of her advancement: it is those that have arrived to this more advanced state, whom I would exhort to follow these instructions, and not to vary their one simple occupation even on approaching the communion; they should remain in silence, and suffer God to act freely and without limitation. Who can better receive the body and blood of CHRIST, than he in whom the Holy Spirit is indwelling?

CHAPTER XVI.

OF READING AND VOCAL PRAYER.

IF, while reading, you feel yourself recollect ed, lay aside the book, and remain in stillness: at all times read but little, and cease to read when you are thus internally attracted.

THE soul that is called to a state of inward silence, should not encumber herself with long vocal prayers: whenever she does pray vocally, and finds a difficulty therein, and an attraction to silence, she should not use constraint by persevering, but yield to the internal drawings, unless the repeating such prayers be a matter of obedience. In any other case, it is much better not to be burdened with and tied down to the repetition of set forms, but wholly given up to the leadings of the Holy Spirit; and herein, indeed, is every species of devotion inclusively fulfilled in a most eminent degree.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF PETITIONS.

THE soul should not be surprised, at feeling herself unable to offer up to God such petitions, as she had formerly made with freedom and facility; for now “the Spirit maketh intercession for her accord-

ing to the will of God, that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.) We must co-operate with, and second the designs of God, which tend to divest us of all our own operations, that in the place thereof his own may be instituted. Let this then be done in you; and suffer not yourself to be attached to any thing, however good it may appear; for it is no longer good, if it in any measure turns you aside from that which God will-*eth* of you: the Divine Will is preferable to all things else. Shake off then all attachment to the interests of self, and live on faith and resignation; here it is that genuine faith begins truly to operate.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF DEFECTS, OR INFIRMITIES.

SHOULD we either wander among externals, or sink into dissipation, or commit a fault, we must instantly turn inwards; for, having departed thereby from our God, we should as soon as possible return unto him, and suffer in his presence whatever sensations he is pleased to impress. On the commission of a fault, it is of great importance to guard against vexa-

tion and disquietude, which springs from a secret root of pride, and a love of our own excellence; we are hurt, by feeling what we are: and if we discourage ourselves or despond, we are the more enfeebled; and, from our reflections on the fault a chagrin arises, which is often worse than the fault itself.

THE truly humble soul is not surprised at her defects or failings; and the more miserable and wretched she beholds herself, the more doth she abandon herself unto GOD, and press for a nearer and more intimate alliance with him, that she may avail herself of an eternal strength. We should the rather be induced to act thus, as GOD himself hath said, “ I will make thee understand what thou oughtest to do; I will teach thee the way by which thou shouldest go; and I will have mine eye continually upon thee for a guide.”—Psa. xxxii. 8. vulg.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF DISTRACTIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

A DIRECT contest and struggle with distractions and temptations, rather serves to augment them; and withdraws the soul from that adherence to GOD, which should ever be her principal occupation. The surest and safest method of conquest, is sim-

ply to turn away from the evil, and draw yet nearer and closer to our GOD: a little child, on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it; but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in total confidence of safety: so, likewise, should the soul turn from the dangers of temptation to her God. "God is in the midst of her," saith the Psalmist, "she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early."—Psa. xlvi. 5.

If we do otherwise, and in our weakness attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently feel ourselves wounded if not totally defeated: but, by casting ourselves into the simple presence of God, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support. This was the succour sought for by David; "I have set," saith he, "the **LORD** always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." (Psa. xvi. 8, 9.) And it is said in Exodus, "The **LORD** shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE PRAYER OF SELF-ANNIHILATION.

SUPPLICATION and sacrifice are comprehended in prayer, which, according to St. John, is “an incense, the smoke whereof ascendeth unto God;” therefore it is said in the Apocalypse, that “unto the angel was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints.”—Chap. viii. 3.

PRAYER is the effusion of the heart in the presence of God: “I have poured out my soul before God,” saith the mother of Samuel.—1 Sam. i. 15. The prayer of the wise men at the feet of CHRIST in the stable of Bethlehem, was signified by the incense they offered: for prayer being the energy and fire of love, melting, dissolving, and sublimating the soul, and causing it to ascend unto God; therefore as the soul is melted and dissolved, in like proportion do odours issue from it; and these odours proceed from the intense fire of love within.

THIS is illustrated in the Canticles, (i. 11.) where the spouse saith, “While the king sitteth on his couch, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” The couch is the ground or centre of the soul; and when God is there, and we know how

to dwell with him, and abide in his presence, the sacred power and influence thereof gradually dissolves the obduration of the soul; and, as it melteth, odours issue forth; hence it is, that the Beloved saith of his spouse, in seeing her soul melt when he spake, “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?”—Cant. v. 6.—and iii. 6.

THUS doth the soul ascend unto GOD, by giving up self to the destroying and annihilating power of Divine Love: this, indeed, is a most essential and necessary sacrifice in the Christian religion, and that alone by which we pay true homage to the sovereignty of GOD; as it is written, “The power of the Lord is great, and he is honoured only by the humble.”—Eccles. iii. 20. By the destruction of the existence of self-hood within us, we truly acknowledge the supreme existence of our GOD; for unless we cease to exist in self, the Spirit of the Eternal Word cannot exist in us; now it is by the giving up of our own life, that we give place for his coming; and “in dying to ourselves he himself liveth and abideth in us.”

WE should, indeed, surrender our whole being unto CHRIST JESUS; and cease to live any longer in ourselves, that he himself may become our life; “that being dead, our life may be hid with Christ in God.”

—Col. iii. 3. “Pass ye into me,” saith God, “all ye who earnestly seek after me.”—Eccl. xxiv. 16. But how is it that we pass into God? We leave and forsake ourselves, that we may be lost in him; and this can be effected only by annihilation, which being the true prayer of adoration, renders unto God alone, all “Blessing, honour, glory, and power, for ever and ever.”

—Rev. v. 13.

THIS is the prayer of truth; “It is worshipping God in spirit and in truth.”—John iv. 23. “In spirit,” because we enter into the purity of that Spirit which prayeth within us, and are drawn forth and freed from our own carnal and corrupt manner of praying; “In truth,” because we are thereby placed in the truth of the All of God, and the Nothing of the creature.

THERE are but these two truths, the All, and the Nothing; every thing else is falsehood. We can pay due honour to the All of God, only in our own annihilation; which is no sooner accomplished, than he, who never suffers a void in nature, instantly fills us with himself.

DID we but know the virtues and the blessings which the soul derives from this prayer, we should willingly be employed therein without ceasing. “It is the pearl of great price: it is the hidden treasure,” (Matt. xiii. 44, 45.) which, whoever findeth,

selleth freely all that he hath to purchase it: it is the well of living water, "which springeth up unto everlasting life:" It is the adoration of God, "in spirit and in truth:"—John iv. 14—23. And, it is the full performance of the purest evangelical precepts.

JESUS CHRIST assureth us, that the "kingdom of God is within us:" (Luke xvii. 21.) and this is true in two senses: First, God becometh so fully the Master and Lord in us, that nothing resisteth his dominion; then is our interior his kingdom: And again, when we possess God, who is the Supreme Good, we possess his kingdom also, wherein there is fullness of joy, and where we attain the end of our creation: thus it is said, "To serve God, is to reign." The end of our creation, indeed, is to enjoy our God, even in this life; but alas! how few there are who advert to this!

CHAPTER XXI.

THAT WE ACT MORE NOBLY, AND WITH MORE ENERGY, BY THIS SPECIES OF PRAYER, THAN BY ANY OTHER.

SOME persons, when they hear of the prayer of silence, falsely imagine that the soul remains stupid, dead, and inactive; but, unquestionably, it acteth therein

more nobly and more extensively, than it had ever done before; for God himself is her mover, and she now acteth by the agency of his Spirit. When St. Paul speaks of our being led by the Spirit of God, it is not meant that we should cease from action; but that we should act through the internal agency of his grace. This is finely represented by the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the "wheels, which had a living spirit; and whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; they ascended, and descended as they were moved; for the spirit of life was in them, and they returned not when they went."—Ezek. i. 18. Thus the soul should be equally subservient to the will of that vivifying Spirit where-with she is informed, and scrupulously faithful to follow only as that moves. Her motions now never tend to return, in reflection on the creatures or herself; but go forward, in an incessant approach toward her chief end.

THIS action of the soul is attended with the utmost tranquillity. When she acteth of herself, the act is forced and constrained; and, therefore, she can the more easily perceive and distinguish it: but when she acteth under the influence of the Spirit of Grace, her action is so free, so easy, and so natural, that it almost seems as if she did not act at all: "He hath set me at large, he hath delivered me, because he delighted in me." Psa. xviii. 19.

WHEN the soul hath got into her central tendency, or in other words, is returned through recollection into herself; from that moment the central attraction becomes a most potent action, infinitely surpassing in its energy every other species. Nothing, indeed, can equal the swiftness of this tendency to the centre: and though an action, yet it is so noble, so peaceful, so full of tranquillity, so natural, and so spontaneous, that it appears to the soul as if she did not act at all.

WHEN a wheel rolls slowly, we can easily distinguish its parts; but when its motion is rapid, we can distinguish nothing. So the soul which rests in GOD, hath an activity exceedingly noble and elevated, yet altogether peaceful: and the more peaceful she is, the swifter is her course; because she is proportionably given up to that Spirit by which she is moved and directed.

THIS attracting Spirit is no other than GOD himself, who, in drawing us, causes us to run unto him. How well did the spouse understand this, when she said, “Draw me, and we will run after thee.”—Cant. i. 3. Draw me unto thee, O my divine Centre, by the secret springs of my existence, and all my powers and senses shall follow the potent magnetism! This simple attraction is both an ointment to heal, and a perfume to allure: “we follow,” saith she, “the fragrance of thy perfumes,” and

though so powerfully magnetic, it is followed by the soul freely, and without constraint, for it is equally delightful as forcible; and, whilst it attracts by its potency, it charms with its sweetness. "Draw me," saith the spouse, "and we will run after thee." She speaketh of and to herself: "draw me,"....behold the unity of the centre which attracteth! "we will run,"—behold the correspondence and course of all the senses and powers, in following that attraction!

INSTEAD then of promoting idleness, we promote the highest activity, by inculcating a total dependence on the Spirit of God, as our moving principle; for it is "in him" and by him alone, "that we live and move, and have our being."—Acts xvii. 18. This meek dependence on the Spirit of God is indispensably necessary to reinstate the soul in its primeval unity and simplicity, that she may thereby attain the end of her creation. We must, therefore, forsake our multifarious activity, to re-enter the simplicity and unity of God, in whose image we were originally formed. "The Spirit is one and manifold."—Wisdom vii. 22. And his unity doth not preclude his multiplicity. We enter into his unity when we are united unto his Spirit, and have one and the same spirit with him; and we are multiplied in respect to the outward execution of his will, without any egression from our state of

union: so that, when we are wholly moved by the divine Spirit, which is infinitely active, our activity must, indeed, differ widely in its energy and degree from that which is merely our own.

WE must yield ourselves to the guidance of "Wisdom, which is more moving than any motion;" (Wisdom vii. 24.) and, by abiding in dependence on its action, our activity will be truly efficient. "All things were made by the Word, and without him was not any thing made, that was made." —John i. 3. God originally formed us in his own likeness; and he now informeth us with the Spirit of his Word, that "Breath of Life," (Gen. ii. 7.) which was inbreathed at our creation, in the participation whereof the image of God consisted; and this life is a life of unity, simple, pure, intimate, and always fruitful. The Devil having broken and deformed the divine image in the soul, the agency of the same Word, whose Spirit was inbreathed at our creation, is absolutely necessary for its renovation; and it can only be renewed by our being passive under him who is to renew it: but who can restore the image of God within us in its primeval form, save he himself who is "the essential image of his Father?"

OUR activity should, therefore, consist in endeavouring to acquire, and maintain, such a state as may be most susceptible of divine impressions, most flexible to all the

operations of the Eternal Word. Whilst a tablet is unsteady, the painter is unable to delineate a true copy: so every act of our own selfish and proper spirit is productive of false and erroneous lineaments; it interrupts the work, and defeats the design of this adorable painter: we must then remain in peace, and move only when he moves us. "Jesus Christ hath the life in himself," (John v. 26.) and he should be the life of every living thing.

As all action is estimable only in proportion to the dignity of the efficient principle, this action is incontestably more noble than any other. Actions produced by a divine principle, are divine; but creaturely actions however good they appear, are only human, or at best virtuous, even when accompanied by grace. Jesus Christ saith, "he hath the life in himself:" All other beings have only a borrowed life; but the Word hath the life in himself; and being communicative of his nature, he desireth to communicate it to man. We should therefore, make room for the influx of this life, which can only be done by the ejection of the Adamical life, the suppression of the activity of self. This is agreeable to the assertion of St. Paul: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!" (2 Cor. v. 17.) but this state can be accomplished only by dying

to ourselves, and to all our own activity, that the activity of God may be substituted in its stead.

INSTEAD, therefore, of prohibiting activity, we enjoin it; but in absolute dependence on the Spirit of God, that his activity may take place of our own. This can only be effected by the concurrence of the creature; and this concurrence can only be yielded by moderating and restraining our own activity, that the activity of God may gradually gain the ascendancy, and finally absorb all that is ours, as distinguishable from it.

JESUS CHRIST hath exemplified this in the Gospel: Martha did what was right; but because she did it in her own spirit, Christ rebuked her. The spirit of man is restless and turbulent; for which reason it does little, though it would appear to do much. “Martha,” saith Christ, “thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”—Luke x. 41, 42. And what was it that Mary had chosen? Repose, tranquillity, and peace. She apparently ceased to act, that the Spirit of Christ might act in her; she ceased to live, that Christ might be her life. This shows us how necessary it is to renounce ourselves, and all our activity, to follow Christ Jesus; and we cannot follow him,

without being animated with his Spirit. Now that his Spirit might gain admission in us, it is necessary that our own proper spirit should be first expelled: "He that is joined unto the Lord," saith St. Paul, "is one spirit with him:" (1 Cor. vi. 17.) and David said, "It was good for him to draw near unto the Lord, and to put his trust in him:"—Psa. lxxiii. 28. This drawing near unto God is the beginning of union.

DIVINE union has its commencement, its progression, and its consummation. It is first an inclination and tendency towards God: when the soul is introverted, in the manner before described, it gets within the influence of the central attraction, and acquires an eager desire after union: on a nearer approach unto God, it adheres to him; and, growing stronger and stronger in its adhesion, it finally becomes one; that is, "one spirit with him;" and it is thus the spirit which had wandered and strayed from God, returns again unto its proper source.

INTO this process, which is the divine motion, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we must necessarily enter. St. Paul saith, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his:" (Rom. viii. 9.) therefore, to be Christ's, we must be filled with his Spirit; and to be filled with his Spirit, we must be emptied of our own. The apostle, in the same passage, proves the neces-

sity of this divine influence, or motion: "As many," saith he, "as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Rom. vii. 14. The spirit of divine filiation is then the spirit of divine action, or motion: he therefore adds, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry Abba, Father."

THIS spirit is no other than the spirit of Christ, through which we participate of his filiation; "And this spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16. When the soul yields herself to the influence and motions of this blessed spirit, she feels the testimony of her divine filiation; and she feels also, with superadded joy, that she hath received not the spirit of bondage, but of liberty, even "the liberty of the children of God." She then finds that she acteth freely and sweetly, though with vigour and infallibility.

THE spirit of divine action is so necessary in all things, that St. Paul, in the same passage, foundeth that necessity on our ignorance with respect to what we pray for: "The Spirit," saith he "also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be

uttered." This is positive: if we know not what we stand in need of, nor pray as we ought to do, for those things which are necessary; and if the spirit which is in us, and to which we resign ourselves, asks and intercedes for us; should we not give unlimited freedom to its action, to its ineffable groanings in our behalf? This Spirit is the Spirit of the Word, which is always heard, as he saith himself: "I know that thou hearest me always;" (John xi. 42.) and if we freely admit this Spirit to pray and intercede for us, we also shall be always heard. The reason of this is given us by the same apostle, that skilful mystic, and master of the internal life, where he adds, "He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God:"—Rom. viii. 27. That is to say, the Spirit demandeth only that which is conformable to the will of God; and the will of God is that we should be saved; that we should become perfect: he therefore intercedeth for that which is necessary for so great an end.

WHY should we then burden ourselves with superfluous cares, and fatigue and weary ourselves in the multiplicity of our ways, "Let us rest in peace?" God himself inviteth us to cast our cares, our anxieties, upon him; and he complains in

Isaiah, with ineffable goodness, that the soul had expended its powers and its treasures on a thousand external objects, and mistook its path to happiness, which was attainable by means much more facile: "Wherefore," saith God, "do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."—Isa. lv. 2.

DID we but know the blessedness of thus hearkening unto God, and how greatly the soul is strengthened and invigorated thereby, "All flesh would surely be silent before the Lord;" (Zech. ii. 13.) all would cease and be still, as soon as he appeareth. But to engage us farther in a boundless resignation, God assures us, by the same prophet, that we should fear nothing in this abandonment, because he takes a care of us, surpassing the highest tenderness of which we can form an idea: "Can a woman," saith he, "forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will not I forget thee."—Isa. xl ix. 15. O blessed assurance, pregnant with consolation! Who after this, shall be fearful of resigning themselves wholly to the dispensations and guidance of their God?

CHAPTER XXII.

OF INTERNAL ACTS.

ACTS are distinguished into external and internal. External acts are those which bear relation to some sensible object, and are either morally good or evil, merely according to the nature of the principle from which they proceed. I intend here to speak only of internal acts, those energies of the soul, by which she turns internally to some object and averts from others.

IF, during my application to God, I should form a will to change the nature of my act, I thereby withdraw myself from God, and turn to created objects; and that, in a greater or less degree according to the strength of the act: and if, when I am turned towards the creature I would return to God, I must necessarily form an act for that purpose; and the more perfect this act is, the more complete is the conversion. Till conversion is perfected, many reiterated acts are necessary; for it is generally progressive, though with some it is almost instantaneous. My act, however, should consist in a continual turning unto God, an exertion of every faculty and power of the soul purely for him, agreeably to the instructions of the son of Si-

rach: "Re-unite all the motions of thy heart in the holiness of God," (vulgate), and to the example of David, "I will keep my whole strength for thee;" (Psa. lviii. 10. vulg.) which is done by earnestly re-entering into one's self; as Isaiah saith, "Return to your heart;" (Isa. xlvi. 8. vulg.) for we have strayed from our heart by sin, and it is our heart only that God requires: "My son give me thine heart, and let thine eye observe my ways."—Prov. xxiii. 26. To give the heart to God, is to have the whole internal energy of the soul ever centring in him, that we may be rendered conformable to his will. We must, therefore, continue invariably turned to God, from our very first application to him.

BUT the soul being weak and unstable, and accustomed to turn to external objects, she is consequently prone to dissipation. This evil, however, will be counteracted, if, on perceiving her aberration, she, by a pure act of return to God, instantly replaces herself in him; and, this act subsists as long as the conversion lasteth, by the powerful influence of a simple and unfeigned return to God; and, as many reiterated acts form a habit, the soul contracts the habit of conversion; and that act, which was before interrupted and distinct, becomes continual.

THE soul should not then be perplexed about forming an act which already subsists.

and which, indeed, it cannot attempt to form without difficulty and constraint: she even finds that she is withdrawn from her proper state, under pretence of seeking that which is in reality acquired, seeing the habit is already formed, and she is confirmed in habitual conversion and habitual love. It is seeking one act by the help of many, instead of continuing attached to God by one simple act alone.

WE may remark, that at times we form with facility many distinct, yet simple acts; which shows that we have wandered, and that we re-enter our heart after having strayed from it: yet, when we have re-entered, we should remain there in peace. We err, therefore, in supposing that we do not form acts; we form them continually: but they should be in their nature conformable to the degree of our spiritual advancement.

THE greatest difficulty with most spiritual people, arises from their not clearly comprehending this matter. Now some acts are transient and distinct, others are continual; and again, some are direct, and others reflex. All cannot form the first, neither are all in a state suited to form the last. The first are adapted to those who have strayed, and who require a distinguishable exertion, proportioned to the degree of their deviation, which, if incon-

siderable, an act of the most simple kind is sufficient.

By the continued act, I mean that whereby the soul is altogether turned toward God in a direct tendency, which always subsists, and which it doth not renew unless it hath been interrupted. The soul being thus turned, is "In the Love," and abides therein; "and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God."—1 John iv. 16. The soul then, as it were, existeth and reposeth in this habitual act, but free from sloth or torpitude; for still there is an unintermittent act subsisting, which is a sweet sinking into the Deity, whose attraction becomes more and more powerful: and, in following this potent attraction, the soul presses farther, and sinks continually deeper into the ocean of divine love, maintaining an activity infinitely more powerful, vigorous, and effectual, than that which served to accomplish her first return.

Now the soul that is thus profoundly and vigorously active, being wholly given up to God, doth not perceive her activity, because it is direct and not reflex: and this is the cause why some, who do not express themselves properly, say that they do not act at all; but it is a mistake, for they were never more truly or nobly active: they should rather say, that they did not distinguish their acts, than that they do not act. I allow they do not act

of themselves; but they are drawn, and they follow the attraction. Love is the weight which sinks them into God, as into an infinite sea, wherein they descend with inconceivable rapidity, from one profound depth to another.

IT is then an impropriety to say, that we do not form acts: all form acts, but the manner of their formation is not alike in all. The cause of the mistake is this; all who know they should act, are desirous of acting distinguishably and perceptibly; but this cannot be: distinct and sensible acts are for beginners, and acts of a higher nature for those in a more advanced state. To stop in the former, which are weak and of little profit, is to debar one's self of the latter; and again, to attempt the latter without having passed through the former, is a no less considerable error.

ALL things should be done in their season: every state has its commencement, its progress, and its consummation; and it is an unhappy error to stop in the beginning. There is even no art but what has its process; and at first we must labour with diligence and toil, but at last we shall reap the harvest of our industry. When the vessel is in port, the mariners are obliged to exert all their strength, that they may clear her thence, and put to sea; but at length they turn her with facility as they please. In like manner, while the soul remains in

sin and creaturely entanglements, very frequent and strenuous endeavours are requisite to effect her freedom ; the cords which withhold her must be loosed; and then, by strong and vigorous efforts, she gathers herself inwards, pushing off gradually from her old port ; and, in leaving that at a distance, she proceeds to the interior, the haven to which she wishes to steer.

WHEN the vessel is thus turned, in proportion as she advances on the sea she leaves the land behind : and the farther she departs from the old harbour, the less difficulty and labour is requisite in moving her forward ; at length she begins to get sweetly under sail ; and now proceeds so swiftly in her course, that the oar, which is become useless, is laid aside. How is the pilot now employed ? He is content with spreading the sails, and holding the rudder. To spread the sails, is to lay one's self before God in the prayer of simple exposition, that we may be acted upon by his Spirit ; to hold the rudder, is to restrain our hearts from wandering from the true course, recalling it gently, and guiding it steadily to the dictates of the blessed Spirit, which gradually gain possession and dominion of the heart, just as the wind, by degrees, fills the sails and impels the vessel. While the winds are fair, the pilot and the mariners rest from their labours, and the vessel

glides rapidly along without their toil; and when they thus repose, and leave the vessel to the wind, they make more way in one hour, than they had done in a length of time by all their former efforts: were they even now to attempt using the oar, they would not only fatigue themselves, but retard the vessel by their ill-timed labours.

THIS is the manner of acting we should pursue interiorly; it will, indeed, advance us in a very short time, by the divine impulsion, infinitely farther than a whole life spent in reiterated acts of self-exertion; and, whosoever will take this path will find it easier than any other.

IF the wind be contrary and blows a storm, we must cast anchor to withhold the vessel: our anchor is a firm confidence and hope in God, waiting patiently the calming of the tempest and the return of a more favourable gale, as David “Waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto him, and heard his cry.”—Psa. xl. 1. We must therefore, be resigned to the Spirit of God, giving up ourselves wholly to his divine guidance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ADMONITION TO PASTORS AND TEACHERS.

IF all who laboured for the conversion of others, were to introduce them immediately into prayer and the interior life, and make it their main design to gain and win over the heart, numberless as well as permanent conversions would certainly ensue. On the contrary, few and transient fruits must attend that labour which is confined to outward matters; such as burdening the disciple with a thousand precepts for external exercises, instead of leaving the soul to Christ, by the occupation of the heart in him.

If ministers were solicitous thus to instruct their parishioners, shepherds, while they watched their flocks, might have the spirit of the primitive Christians, and the husbandman at the plough maintain a blessed intercourse with his God; the manufacturer, while he exhausts his outward man with labour, would be renewed in internal strength: and every species of vice would shortly disappear, and every parishioner become a true follower of the Good Shepherd.

OH! when once the heart is gained, how easily is all moral evil corrected! it is, therefore, that God, above all things re-

quires the heart. It is the conquest of the heart alone, that can extirpate those dreadful vices which are so predominant amongst the peasantry, such as drunkenness, blasphemy, lewdness, envy and theft. Jesus Christ would become the universal and peaceful sovereign, and the face of the church would be wholly renewed.

THE decay of *internal* piety is unquestionably the source of the various errors that have arisen in the church; all which would speedily be sapped and overthrown, was *inward* religion to be re-established. Errors are only so far prejudicial to the soul, as they tend to weaken faith, and deter from prayer; and if, instead of engaging our wandering brethren in vain disputes, we could but teach them simply to believe, and diligently to pray, we should lead them sweetly unto God.

O how inexpressibly great is the loss sustained by mankind from the neglect of the interior? And how tremendous must the great day of retribution be to those who are entrusted with the care of souls, for not having discovered and dispensed to their flock this hidden manna.

SOME excuse themselves by saying, that this is a dangerous way; pleading the incapacity of simple persons to comprehend spiritual matters. But the oracles of Truth affirm the contrary: "The Lord loveth those who walk simply."—Prov. xii. 22.

vulg. And where can be the danger of walking in “the only true way,” which is Jesus Christ? of giving up ourselves to him, fixing our eye continually on him, placing all our confidence in his grace, and tending with all the strength of our soul to his pure love?

THE simple ones, so far from being incapable of this perfection, are, by their docility, innocence, and humility, peculiarly adapted and qualified for its attainment; and, as they are not accustomed to reasoning, they are less employed in speculations, less tenacious of their own opinions. Even from their want of learning they submit more freely to the teachings of the divine Spirit; whereas others, who are blinded by self-sufficiency, and enslaved by prejudice, give great resistance to the operations of grace.

WE are told in Scripture, “that unto the simple God giveth the understanding of his law;” (Psal. cxix. 130. vulgate:) and we are also assured, that God loveth to communicate with them: “The Lord careth for the simple; I was reduced to extremity and he saved me.”—Psal. cxiv. 6. vulgate. To warn spiritual fathers against preventing the little ones from coming to Christ, he himself said to his apostles, “Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”—Matt. xix. 14. It was the endeavour of the apostles to prevent children from

going to our Lord, which occasioned this gracious charge. Man frequently applies a remedy to the outward body, whilst the disease lies at the heart.

THE cause of our being so unsuccessful in reforming mankind, especially those of the lower class, is our beginning with external matters; all our labours in this field, do but produce such fruit as endures not: but, if the key of the interior be first given, the exterior would be naturally and easily reformed. To teach man to seek God in his heart, to think of him, to return to him whenever he finds he has wandered from him, and to do and to suffer all things with a single eye to please him, is the natural and ready process; it is leading the soul to the very source of grace, wherein is to be found all that is necessary for sanctification.

I THEREFORE conjure you all, O ye who have the care of souls, to put them at once into this way, which is Jesus Christ; nay, it is he himself that conjures you, by the precious blood he hath shed for those entrusted to you, "to speak to the heart of Jerusalem."—Isa. xl. 2. vulgate. O ye dispensers of his grace, ye preachers of his word, ye ministers of his sacraments, establish his kingdom!—and, that it may indeed be established, make him ruler over the hearts of his subjects! for, as it is the heart alone that can oppose his sovereignty, it is by the subjection of the heart that his sovereignty

is most highly exalted : “ Give glory to the holiness of God, and he shall become your sanctification.”—Isa. viii. 13. vulgate. Compose catechisms particularly to teach prayer, not by reasoning nor by method, for the simple are incapable thereof; but, to teach the prayer of the heart, not of the understanding ; the prayer of God’s Spirit, not of man’s invention.

ALAS ! by wanting them to pray in elaborate forms, and to be curiously critical therein, you create their chief obstacles. The children have been led astray from the best of fathers, by your endeavouring to teach them too refined, too polished a language. Go then, ye poor children, to your heavenly Father, speak to him in your natural language ; and, though it be ever so rude and barbarous in the opinion of men, it is not so to him. A father is much better pleased with an address which love and respect in the child throws into disorder, because he knows it proceeds from the heart, than by a formal and barren harangue, though ever so elaborate in the composition. The simple and undisguised emotions of filial love are infinitely more expressive than all language, and all reasoning.

By forming instructions how to love by rule and method the Essential Love, men have in a great measure estranged themselves from him. O how unnecessary is it to teach an art of loving ! The language

of love; though natural to the lover, is nonsense and barbarism to him that loveth not. The best way to learn the love of God, is to love Him. The ignorant and simple, because they proceed with more cordiality and simplicity, often become most perfect therein. The Spirit of God needs none of our arrangements and methods; when it pleaseth him, he turns shepherds into prophets; and, so far from excluding any from the temple of prayer, he throws wide the gates, that all may enter; while Wisdom cries aloud in the highways, " Whoso is simple let him turn in hither ;" (Prov. ix. 4.) and to the fools she saith, " Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."—Prov. ix. 5. And doth not Jesus Christ himself thank his Father, for having " hid the secrets of his kingdom from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes ?"—Matt. xi. 25.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE MOST CERTAIN METHOD TO ATTAIN
DIVINE UNION.

IT is impossible to attain divine union solely by the activity of meditation, or by the meltings of the affections, or even by the highest degree of luminous and distinctly comprehended prayer. There are

many reasons for this, the chief of which are as follow:

FIRST, According to Scripture “no man shall see God and live.”—Exod. xxxiii. 20. Now all the exercises of discursive prayer, and even of active contemplation, while esteemed as the summit and end of the passive, and not merely as a preparative to it, are still “living exercises by which we cannot see God;” that is to say, be united with him: for all that is of man’s own power or exertion, must first die, be it ever so noble, ever so exalted.

ST. John relates, “That there was a great silence in heaven.”—Rev. viii. 1. Now heaven represents the fund and centre of the soul, wherein, ere the majesty of God appears, all must be hushed to silence. All the efforts, nay, the very existence of self, or propriety, must be destroyed; because nothing is opposite to God, but propriety; and all the malignity of man is in this propriety, as in the power of its evil nature; insomuch, that the purity of a soul encreases, in proportion as it loses this self-hood; till at length, that which had been a fault, while the soul lived in propriety, and acted from self, becomes no longer such, from the purity and innocence that she hath acquired, by departing from that propriety, or self-hood, which caused the dissimilitude between her and God.

SECONDLY, To unite two things so opposite, as the impurity of the creature and the purity of God, the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of man, much more is requisite than the impotent efforts of the creature: no less than a singular and efficacious operation of the Almighty can ever accomplish this; for things must be reduced to some similarity, before they can blend and become one. Can the impurity of dross be united with the purity of gold? What then does God do? He sends his own Wisdom before him, as the last fire shall be sent upon the earth, to destroy by its activity all that is impure therein; and, as nothing can resist the power of that fire, in like manner this wisdom dissolves and destroys all the impurities of the creature, and disposes it for divine union.

THIS impurity, so opposite to union, consists in *propriety* and *activity*.

PROPRIETY, or self, is the source and fountain of all that defilement and corruption, which can never be allied to Essential Purity; the rays of the sun may glance, indeed, upon filth and mire, but can never be united with them. Activity obstructs union; for God being an infinite stillness, the soul, in order to be united to him, must participate of his stillness, else the contrariety between stillness and activity would prevent assimilation.

THEREFORE, the soul can never arrive

to divine union but by the repose or stillness of her will; nor can she ever become one with God, but by being re-established in the purity of her first creation, that is, in this central repose. God purifies the soul by his wisdom, as refiners do metals in the furnace. Gold cannot be purified but by fire, which gradually separates from it and consumes all that is earthly and heterogeneous: it must be melted and dissolved, and all impure mixtures taken away, by casting it again and again into the furnace: thus it is refined from all internal corruption, and even exalted to a state incapable of farther purification. The goldsmith now no longer discovers any adulterate mixture; its purity is perfect, its simplicity complete. The fire no longer touches it; and were it to remain an age in the furnace, its purity would not be increased, or its substance diminished. Then it is fit for the most exquisite workmanship: and if, thereafter, this gold seems obscured or defiled, it is no more than accidental defilement, contracted by its contiguity to some impure body; but this is only superficial, and widely different from its former impurity, which was hidden in the very centre and ground of its nature, and as it were identified with it. Those, however, who are ignorant of this process, and its blessed effects, would be apt to despise and reject the vessel of pure gold,

sullied by some external pollution; and prefer an impure and gross metal, that appeared superficially bright and polished. Farther, the goldsmith never mingles together the pure and the impure gold, lest the dross of the one should corrupt the other: before they can be united they must be equally refined: he, therefore, plunges the impure metal into the furnace, till all its dross is purged away, and it becomes fully prepared for incorporation and union with the pure gold.

THIS is what St. Paul means, when he declares, that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is:" (Cor. iii. 13.) he adds, "If any man's work be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."—15th verse. He here intimates, that there are a species of works so degraded by impure mixtures, that though the mercy of God accepts them, yet they must pass through the fire, to be purged from the contamination of propensity and self; and it is in this sense, that God is said "to examine and judge our righteousness," (Psa. xiv. 3. vulg.) because that "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified; but by the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ."—Rom. iii. 20, &c.

THUS we may see that the divine justice and wisdom, as an unremitting fire, must devour and destroy all that is earthly, sen-

sual, and carnal, and all self-activity, before the soul can be fitted for, and capable of, union with God. Now, this purification can never be accomplished by the industry of fallen man; on the contrary, he submits to it always with reluctance; he is so enamoured of self-hood, and so averse to its destruction, that did not God act upon him powerfully, and with authority, he would for ever resist.

IT may perhaps, be objected here, that God never robs man of his free will, he can always resist the divine operations; and that, I therefore err, in saying God acts thus absolutely, and without the consent of man.

LET me, however, explain myself. By man's giving a passive consent, God without usurpation, may assume a full power and an entire guidance; for having, in the beginning of his conversion, made an unreserved surrender of himself to all that God wills of him or by him, he thereby gave an active consent to whatsoever God thereafter might operate or require. But when God begins to burn, destroy, and purify, then the soul, not perceiving the salutary design of these operations, shrinks from them; and, as the gold seems rather to blacken than brighten when first put into the furnace, so she conceives, that her purity is lost, and that her temptations are her sins; insomuch, that if an active and

explicit consent were then requisite, the soul could scarcely give it, nay, often would withhold it. The utmost she can do is to remain firm in her passive disposition, enduring as well as she is able all these divine operations, which she neither can nor will obstruct.

In this manner, therefore, the soul is purified from all her proper, distinct, perceptible and multiplied operations, which constitute the great dissimilitude between her and God: she is rendered, by degrees, conform, and then uniform;* and the passive capacity of the creature is elevated, ennobled and enlarged, though in a secret and hidden manner, and therefore called mystical: but, in all these operations, the soul must concur passively. It is true, indeed, that, at the beginning of her purification, her activity is requisite; from which, as the divine operations becomes stronger and stronger, she must gradually cease: yielding herself up to the impulses of the divine Spirit, till she is wholly absorbed in him. But this is often a difficult and tedious process.

We do not then say, as some have falsely supposed, that there is no need of action in the process of divine purification: on the contrary, we affirm it is the gate; at which,

* Conform, by passivity and resignation; and uniform, by "no longer living herself, but by Christ living, moving, and acting in her."—Gal. ii. 20.

however, we would not have those stop who are to attain ultimate perfection, which is impracticable, except the first helps are laid aside; for, however necessary they may have been at the entrance of the road, they become afterwards mere clogs, and greatly detrimental to those who adhere to them, preventing them from ever arriving at the end of their course. This made St. Paul say, “ Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. iii. 13.

WOULD you not say that he had lost his senses, who, having undertaken an important journey, should fix his abode at the first inn, because he had been told that many travellers, who had come that way, had lodged in the house, and made it *their* place of residence? All that we should wish then is, that souls should “ press toward the mark,” should pursue their journey, and take the shortest and easiest road; not stopping at the first stage, but following the counsel and example of St. Paul, suffer themselves to be guided and governed by the Spirit of Grace, which would infallibly conduct them to the end of their creation, the enjoyment of God. But, while we confess that the enjoyment of God is the end for which alone we were created; that,

"without holiness," none can attain it; and that, to attain it, we must necessarily pass through a severe and purifying process; how strange is it that we should dread and avoid this process, as if that could be the cause of evil and imperfection in the present life, which is to be productive of glory and blessedness in the life to come!

NONE can be ignorant that God is the Supreme Good; that essential blessedness consists in union with him; that the saints are more or less glorified, according as the union is more or less advanced;* and, that the soul cannot attain this union by the mere activity of its own powers, for God communicates himself to the soul in proportion as its passive capacity is great, noble, and extensive: it cannot be united to God but in simplicity and passivity; and, as this union is beatitude itself, the way to it in simplicity and passivity, instead of being evil, must be good, must be most free from delusion and danger, the safest, the surest, and the best.

WOULD Jesus Christ have made this the most perfect and necessary way, had there been evil or danger therein? No! all can travel this road to blessedness; and all are called thereto, as to the enjoyment of God, which alone is beatitude, both in

* Psalm lxxxvi. 10.—xlii. 10. Zech. ii. 13.

this world and the next. I say the enjoyment of God himself and not his gifts; which, as they do not constitute essential beatitude, cannot fully content the immortal spirit: the soul is so noble, so great, that the most exalted gifts of God cannot fill its immense capacity with happiness, unless the Giver also bestows himself. Now the whole desire of the Divine Being is to give himself to every creature, according to the capacity with which it is endued; and yet, alas! how reluctantly man suffers himself to be drawn to God! how fearful is he to prepare for divine union!

SOME say, that we should not attempt by our own ability, to place ourselves in this state. I grant it: but what a poor subterfuge is this? since I have all along asserted and proved, that the utmost exertion of the highest created being could never accomplish this of itself; it is God alone must do it. The creature may, indeed, open the window; but it is the sun himself that must give the light.

THE same persons say again, that some may feign to have attained this blessed state: but, alas! none can any more feign this, than the wretch who is on the point of perishing with hunger, can for a length of time feign to be full and satisfied; some wish or word, some sigh or sign, will inevitably escape him, and betray his famished state.

SINCE then none can attain this blessed state, save those whom God himself leads and places therein, we do not pretend to introduce any into it, but only to point out the shortest and safest road that leads to it: beseeching ye not to be retarded in your progress by any external exercises; not to sit down a resident at the first inn, nor to be satisfied with the sweets which are tasted in the milk for babes. If the water of eternal life is shown to some thirsty souls, how inexpressibly cruel would it be, by confining them to a round of external forms, to prevent their approaching it: so that their longing shall never be satisfied, but they shall perish with thirst.

LET us all agree in the way, as we all agree in the end, which is evident and uncontrovertible. The way has its beginning, progress, and end; and the nearer we approach the end, the farther is the beginning behind us: it is only by proceeding from one, that we can arrive at the other. Would you get from the entrance to the distant end of the road, without passing over the intermediate space? and surely, if the end is good, holy, and necessary, and the entrance also good, can that be condemnable, as evil, which is the necessary passage, the direct road leading from the one to the other?

O YE blind and foolish men, who pride

yourselves on science, wisdom, wit, and power, how well do you verify what God hath said, that " His secrets are hidden from the great and wise, and revealed unto the little ones,...the babes!"

END OF M. GUION ON PRAYER.

[We subjoin the annexed Poem, not doubting but it will be acceptable to many of our readers. It was written by Madame Guion, together with several other pieces of a similar tendency, during her long imprisonment in the Bastile, and elsewhere. It will at least serve to shew the tender sensibility of her poetic vein; and, her entire devotion to HIM for whom she sacrificed—even her reputation.]

THE NATIVITY:

A POEM.

By Madame de la Mothe Guion:

'TIS folly all—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of Nature dress'd by Art,
Enchant no longer this indiff'rent heart;
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mould'ring wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.

Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes, and plains, whose plenty never fails;
Deep rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies;
Th' abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades,
Vainly the sun in all its pow'r invades;
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound;
Whose verdure lives while winter scowls around:
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep;
Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer,
Meads, crown'd with flow'rs; streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters, and whose murmurs, join
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrow'd plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain;

All, all have lost the charms they once possess'd ;
An infant God reigns sov'reign in my breast ;
From Bethl'em's bosom I no more will rove ;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.

Ye mightier rivers, that with sounding force
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course !
Winds, clouds, and lightnings ! and ye waves, whose heads
Curl'd into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads !
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,
Spread with the wreck of planks and shatter'd sails ;
On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides,
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin, strew'd around
With vessels bulg'd, and bodies of the drown'd !

Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves ;
Swift darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all th' aquatic world with terror eyes !
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you :
The world, a more disturb'd and boist'rous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me ;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.

Thou azure vault, where, through the gloom of night,
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light !
Thou moon, whose car, encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wond'ring eyes ;
Again retiring, when the brighter sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run !
Behold him where he shines ! His rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasur'd, measure all our days ;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quick'ning heat,
And all he cheers, are fruitful, fair and sweet.

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas ! but miss the rose :
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid good to fill its vast desires ;
In vain they represent His matchless might
Who call'd them out of deep primæval night ;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe :
I seek the Giver of the charms they show ;
Nor, Him beside, throughout the world he made,
Lives there, in whom I trust for cure or aid.

Infinite God ! thou great unrivall'd One !
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun ;
Compar'd with thine, how dim his beauty seems,
How quench'd the radiance of his golden beams !

Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;
In thee alone dwells all that I can love;
All darkness flies when thou art pleas'd t' appear,
A sudden spring renew's the fading year;
Where e'er I turn, I see thy power and grace
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of thee;
Ev'n I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt thy praise, and join the gen'ral song.

Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in thine image, man....
Holy and just....the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffus'd throughout th' infinitude of space,
Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling-place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns, eluding our most active pow'rs;
Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown;
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sov'reign of the heart !

Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires;
He at whose voice heav'n trembles, even He,
Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me....
Lo ! there he lies....that smiling Infant said,
"Heav'n, earth, and sea, exist !" and they obey'd.
Ev'n He whose Being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;
Eternal and Immortal, seems to cast
That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink, and vanish at the thought !

Sweet Solitude, and scene of my repose !
This rustic sight assuages all my woes....
That crib contains the Lord whom I adore;
And earth's a shade, that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tow'r,
I dwell secure beneath his shelt'ring pow'r,
And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight is here.
I see th' Almighty swath'd in infant bands,
Tied helpless down, the Thunder-bearer's hands !
And in this shed, that mystery discern,
Which faith and love, and they alone, can learn.

Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord !
Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford !
Confess the God that guides the rolling year;
Heav'n, do him homage ; and thou Earth, revere !

Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
 Your hearts an offering, and adore your King !
 Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love ;
 Join, in his praise, th' harmonious worlds above ;
 To Bethl'ém haste, rejoice in his repose,
 And praise him there for all that he bestows !

Man, busy Man, alas ! can ill afford
 T' obey the summons, and attend the Lord ;
 Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
 By glitt'ring shows of pomp and wealth beguil'd ;
 And blind to genuine excellence and grace,
 Finds not her Author in so mean a place.
 Ye unbelieving ! learn a wiser part,
 Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart ;
 There, soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
 Glow for that Infant God from whom it came ;
 Resist not, quench not that divine desire,
 Melt all your adamant in heav'nly fire !

Not so will I requite thee, gentle Love !
 Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove ;
 And ev'ry heart beneath thy pow'r should fall,
 Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
 But I am poor, oblation I have none,
 None for a Saviour, but himself alone :
 Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came ;
 And if I give my body to the flame,
 My patience, love, and energy divine
 Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine.
 Ah ! vain attempt, t' expunge the mighty score !
 The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.

Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
 The trophy of thy glory shall be built ;
 My self-disdain shall be th' unshaken base,
 And my deformity, its fairest grace ;
 For destitute of good and rich in ill,
 Must be my state and my description still.
 And do I grieve at such a humbling lot ?
 Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought....
 Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu !
 I have no wish, no memory for you ;
 The more I feel my mis'ry, I adore
 The sacred Innate of my soul the more ;
 Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
 Spring from the sense of having nought beside.

In thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might ;
 My wand'rings prove thy wisdom infinite ;
 All that I have, I give thee ; and then see
 All contrarieties unite in thee ;
 For thou hast join'd them, taking up our woe,
 And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,

By filling with thy grace and love divine
A gulph of evil in this heart of mine.
This is indeed to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink... 'tis matching earth and skies !
I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore
An aching heart that throbs to thank thee more ;
The more I love thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love ;
Till, on a deluge of thy mercy toss'd,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

THE END.

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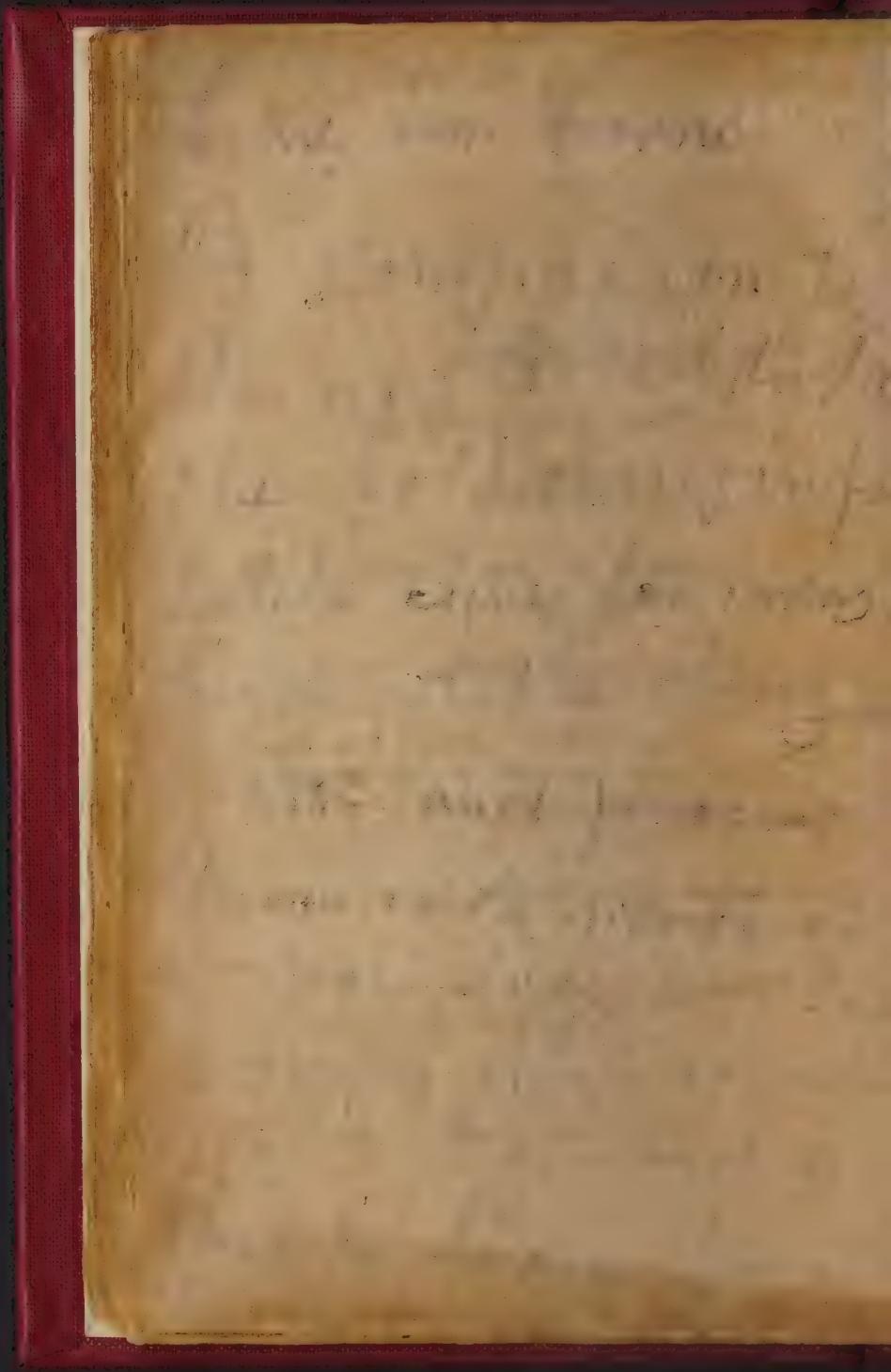
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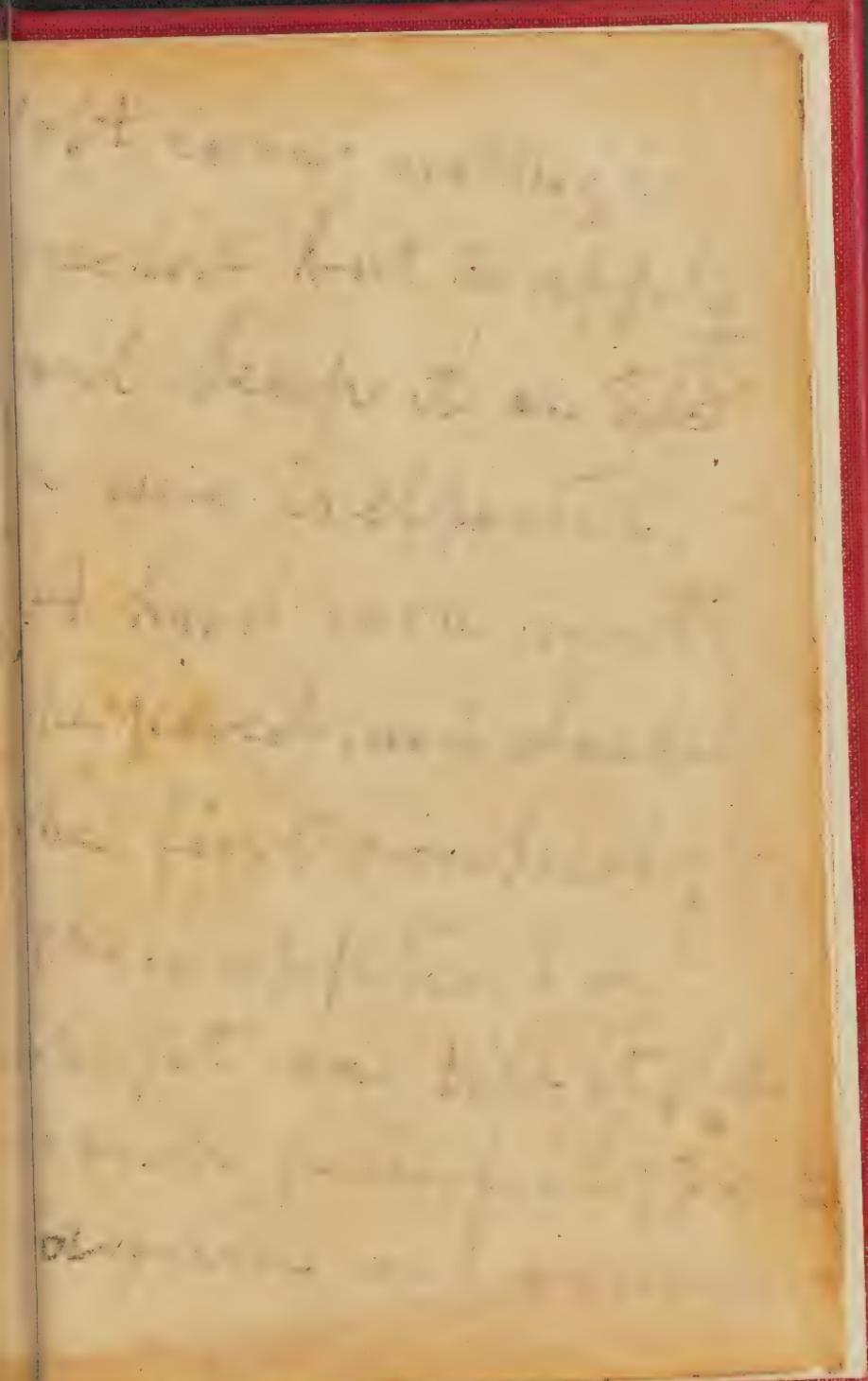
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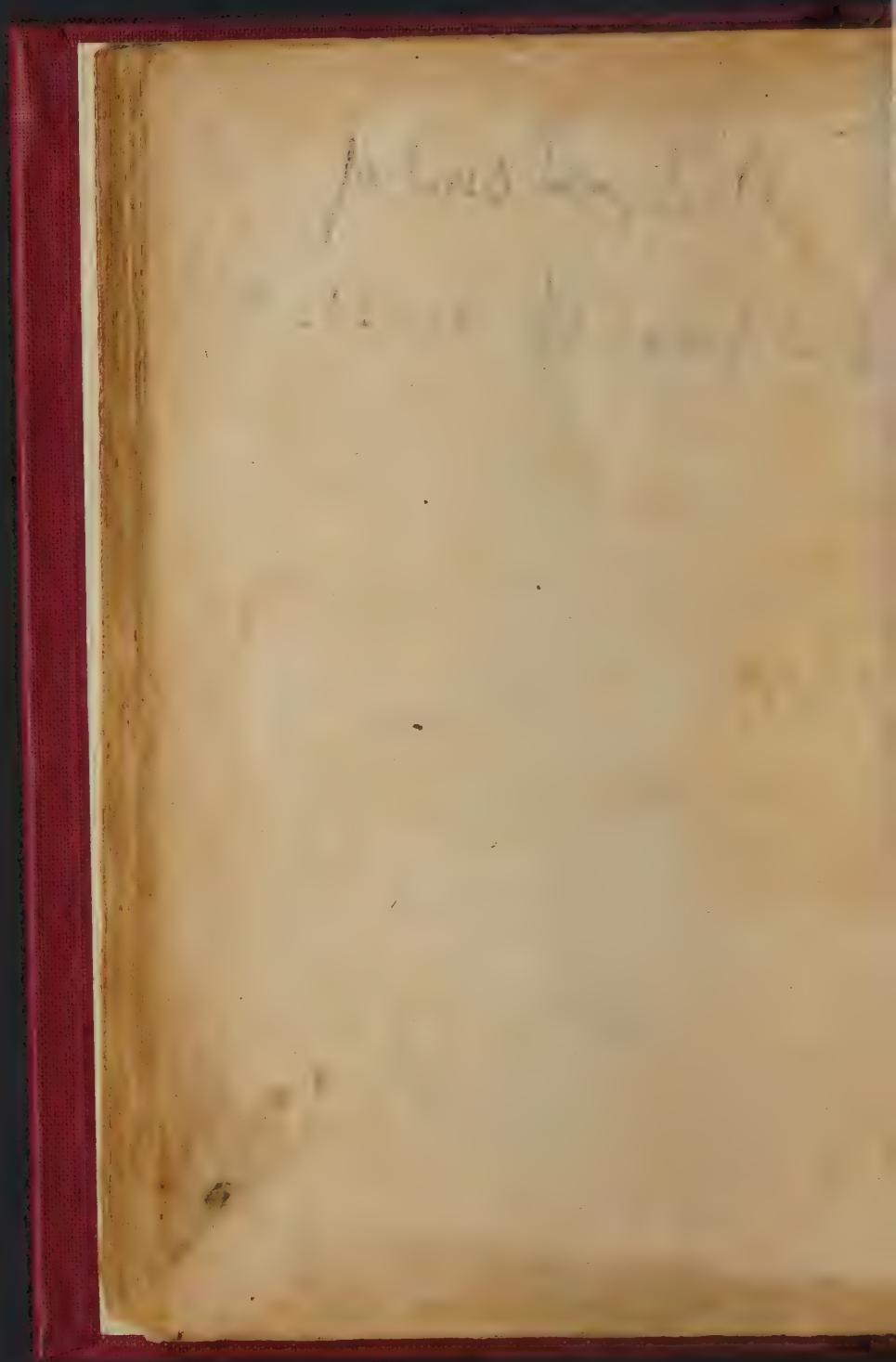
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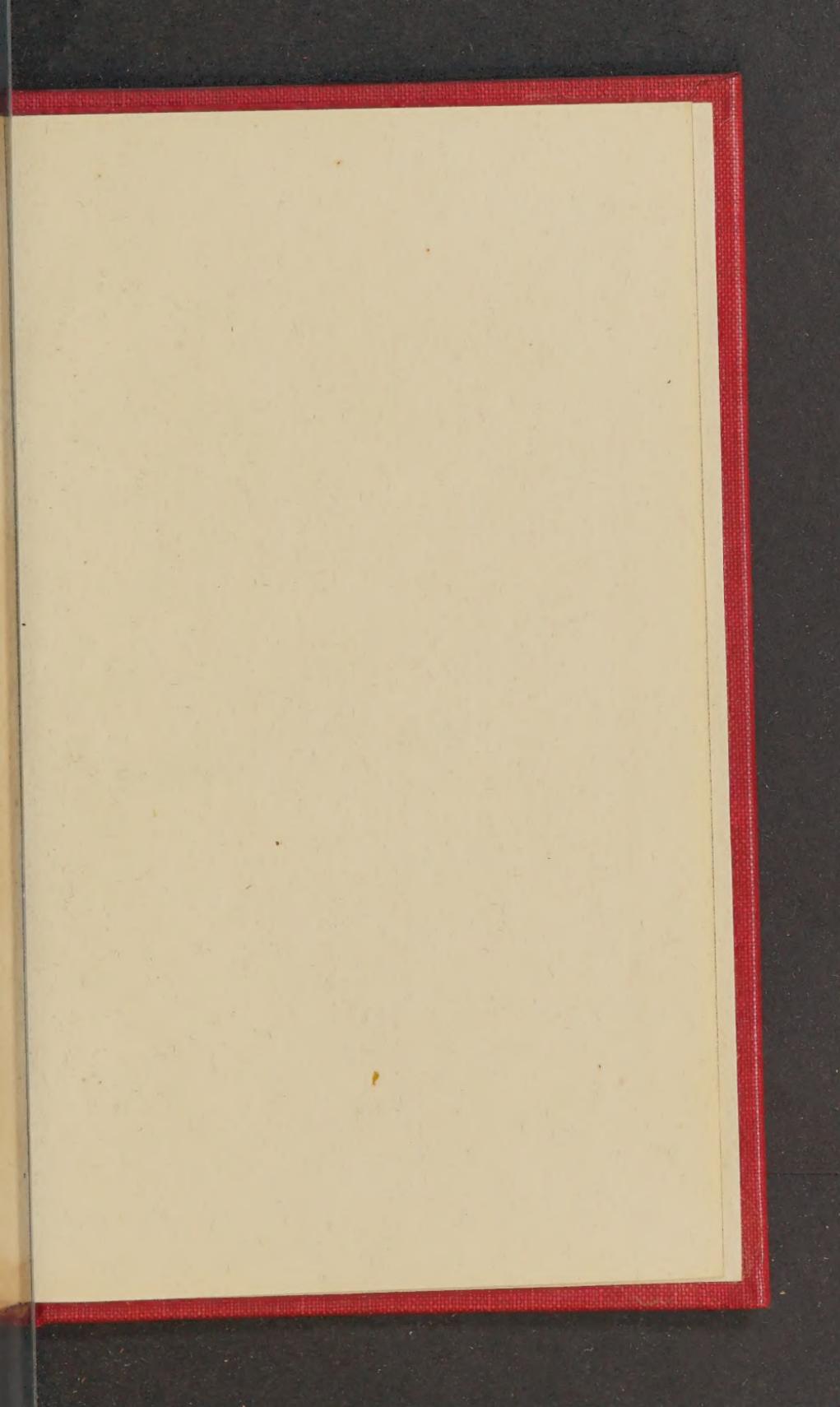
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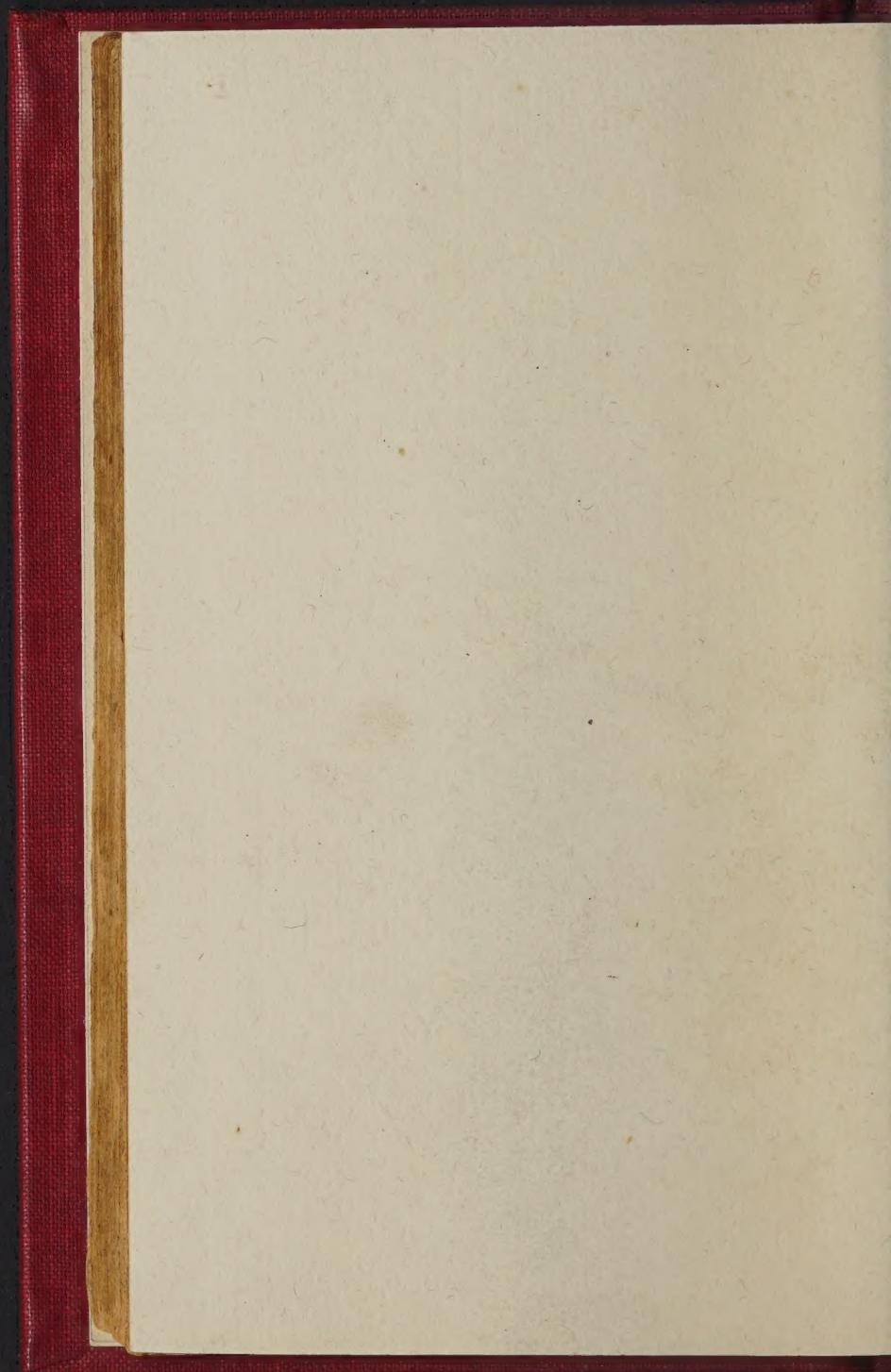
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